Dudley
CHRONICLE

Thursday, February 23, 2017 | Read by more than 62,000 people | Price when sold 70p

EXPERTS ARE BACKING ALDI'S PLAN FOR FORMER DIY STORE

An Aldi supermarket is proposed for the former DIY store

A FORMER DIY store in Kingswinford is a step closer to becoming a supermarket after the plans were backed by planning officers.

The Focus DIY store, in Dudley Road, became an eyesore after standing empty for years. Residents called for action over the boarded-up and run-down property, which has also been occupied by travellers.

Aldi wants to convert the building into its latest Black Country supermarket, as the popular budget chain continues its expansion plans across the region.

The proposals would see the Focus store converted and the car park upgraded to provide more than 100 spaces.

Aldi aims to create 40 jobs at the new store on the site of a former DIY and garden centre. The site off Dudley Road, Kingswinford, has stood derelict for three years.

The Aldi supermarket would cover 1,350 square metres. It is expected to create both full-time and part-time jobs.

Aldi submitted its application to Dudley Council, stating: "We feel the proposals represent a well thought out and sensitive response within the constraints of the site.

Community

"The Aldi 'deep discount' retail store provides an amenity to the local area, which is currently lacking, along with the creation of jobs both now and at a later date. Aldi looks forward to becoming a considerate neighbour and part of the local community."

The design and access statement submitted as part of the plans says that vehicle access to the site will remain the same.

The existing main shop entrance will be blocked off and a new lobby created with a path from Dudley Road relocated.

The prospect of a the new store proved popular at a consultation event held in St Mary's Church Centre in Kingswinford last year.

Aldi has invested in several new stores locally, including in Oldbury and on the site of the former King Arthur pub in Dudley.

Planning officers are telling Tuesday's planning committee meeting that the development would improve the area and have recommended approval.

Ferris wheel hopes dashed by wrangle over price

NO RETURN FOR THE DUDLEY EYE

A GIANT ferris wheel, dubbed the Dudley Eye, will not be returning to the town centre this Easter, despite being a major success last year.

The Dudley Eye will not be coming back to the town this spring because traders and the ride operators have failed to reach an agreement.

The arrival of the wheel gained national interest and attracted more than 13,500 people to the town centre.

But Dudley traders, who organised the arrival of the attraction last March, said it was unlikely to come back this year after a price could not be agreed. This is despite high hopes that the wheel would return to repeate last spring's success.

Report by Alex Ross

Dudley Council's cabinet member for tourism, Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, said: "It was a success last year but, by my understanding, it was to come round every other year. It could be that it returns next year.

"A lot has been going on in the town to improve what is offered. We have developments with the Metro, the very light rail scheme and reusing the Cavendish site. Much emphasis is being put on tourism over the next two to three years."

Hopeful

Len Leniham, managing director of Dudley Market Traders' Association, said: "We haven't been able to come to a financial conclusion but we are still hopeful of being able to agree a decision with the operators at a later date."

Operators of the ride did not originally want to visit Dudley last year because they felt that the town would not offer them a significant footfall. But traders eventually convinced them.

Around 13,500 people turned out to ride the 115ft attraction, beating the original target of 8,000 visitors.

Dudley traders paid around £10,000 for the ride to but were hoping for a reduction this year. However, both parties have not been able to agree on a price.

The ride quickly earned the nickname the Dudley Eye after setting up next to Stone Street and Priory Street.

It received criticism from some on social media, mocking the panoramic views of the Black Country and was even called 'the worst tourist attraction in Britain'.

TV presenter Piers Morgan joined in the debate, sparking controversy when he commented: "I cannot think of a grimmer panorama than Dudley."

As a result, many visitors showed their humour by riding the wheel whilst wearing Pier Morgan masks.

Traders in the town had hailed the attraction as a 'roaring success' and its time in the town was extended by an extra two weeks.

Trader Dave Carter, of Arcade Toy Shop, at the time commented: "Without exception, the feedback we have had has been positive. Shortly after Piers Morgan ran down Dudley and the DY Eye, we saw a big increase in footfall and this lead to an increase in trade for us, which has to be a good thing."

Supporters of the Dudley Eye dressed up as Piers Morgan after he criticised the attraction

REFUSE

Tip to move out under new plan

THE public tip in Stourbridge is poised to close with operations shifted to Brierley Hill, under new plans by Dudley Council.

Council bosses want to sell off Dudley borough's main tip on Birmingham Street and instead make the Leys Depot in Brierley Hill the central base for waste disposal.

The council will also aim to make money out of the move, with chiefs hoping the Stourbridge site can be sold to developers. Neighbouring land has already been developed for a Premier Inn hotel with fast food chains also moving in nearby.

Bosses say the Leys Road depot in Brierley Hill will be able to take more vehicles and is better equipped to handle recycling of rubbish.

CRIME

Bank remains shut after knife robbery

A HIGH Street bank in Dudley has been closed for a fortnight following an armed robbery.

Police were called to The Royal Bank of Scotland on High Street just after 4pm on February 3. A female customer threatened staff with a knife and stole cash before fleeing on foot. No one was injured.

The bank said it could not confirm when the branch would re-open but customers could use branches in Wolverhampton and Walsall.

FINANCE

Building society sees profits dip

PROFITS fell for the Tipton and Coseley Building Society last year despite a big increase in mortgage lending.

The society, which has its headquarters in Owen Street, Tipton, saw the group net profit down from £2.31 million in 2015 to £1.69m.

Mortgage lending last year totalled £66.58m, up nearly 28 per cent from £52.08m in 2015.

The 116-year-old building society' gross capital increased to £37m, up almost five per cent on the previous year, and total assets were £372.4m, up two per cent on 2015.

INSIDE

TANK TRIBUTE TO HERO STAN

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Duncan's uncle Sid was a hero too

Duncan Edwards

TO the thousands of adoring Manchester United fans who watched him from the terraces, Duncan Edwards was their hero.

But the Dudley-born football icon, who died from injuries sustained in the Munich air disaster in 1958, was not the only hero from the family, and not the only one to die tragically.

It has been 100 years since the death of Duncan's uncle Sidney Edwards, who was killed on the battlefield during the First World War.

While Duncan's journey from the playing fields of Dudley to the Busby Babes of Manchester United is known the world over, his uncle's story remained hidden until recently. It was only when Roger Brownhill, Duncan's second cousin, researched his family history that he found out about Sidney's life and premature death.

Born in 1893, Sidney, who also hailed from Dudley, was only in his 20s when he died fighting in Mesopotamia, which is today mostly Iraq.

Little is known about Sidney's life, but he left behind a wife Annie and a young son, also called Sidney, when he went to fight. He served as a private with the 9th Battalion of the Worcestershire Regiment.

His regiment trained on Salisbury Plain before heading for Gallipoli, in modern-day Turkey, where it is believed Sidney saw action.

In January 1916 the regiment moved to Egypt and soon after to Mesopotamia.

Sadly, Sidney would never return home to his young family in Dudley. He died on January 25, 1917, at the Battle of Kut-al-Amara. He is buried in the Amara War Cemetery, Iraq.

Unfortunately, the family do not have a photograph of Sidney.

Borough leisure centres have made a £5m loss

DUDLEY'S leisure centres made a loss of more than £5 million over the last three years.

The figures from 2013 to 2016 show that the three centres had an expenditure of more than £13m but an income of just over £8m during that period.

Council bosses have revealed they want to demolish the three centres –in Dudley, Stourbridge and Halesowen – and replace them with two new state-of-the-art facilities, proposed for Dudley and Lye.

They calculate this could saved the cash-strapped authority £1.75m.

The council say now is the time to act as the centres are due essential repair, which would cost £2m.

More than 4,000 residents have signed a petition to keep the centres open.

Now opposition UKIP councillor Paul Brothwood has insisted that the council must find out why the centres have made such a loss.

He said: "We need to ensure value for money for taxpayers. The council need to look at why the centres have made such a loss.

"It seems the services the council provide to residents are not marketed well enough to generate more income. The leisure centres are a vital service and must be protected."

Shortfall

Crystal Leisure Centre is making the biggest loss, with a shortfall of over £1.5m between 2015 and 2016.

Dudley Leisure Centre made a loss of over £500,000 and Halesowen Leisure Centre lost over £600,000 during the same period.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "The expenses at the leisure centres are far higher than the income, so the council is having to fund them. The facilities are old and need to be upgraded. The centres have a time span of around 30 years but they're more than that – Halesowen Leisure Centre is over 50 years old.

"I must stress, the proposed closure of the three centres is years away and will only happen following full consultation and scrutiny, and after two new centres are built."

Call to tackle town's eyesore sites

Campaigner Simon Townend at the litter strewn School Street site in Dudley town centre

A CAMPAIGN has been launched to regenerate two empty plots of land near a town centre that have become grot spots.

Charity worker Simon Townend is calling on Dudley Council leaders to force the owners of the sites, located on Wolverhampton Street and School Street, to tidy them up.

His campaign has been backed by ward councillors and Dudley North MP Ian Austin, who says he could 'weep at the state of the some the buildings and sites in the area'.

A vacant two-storey building has become derelict, with its windows boarded up and fenced off. The outer wall is also peeling while a plot of land has become littered with rubbish.

Mr Townend, from Dudley, said both sites could be put to better use, such as a car park.

The 54-year-old, who works in a Mary Stevens Hospice charity shop, has now launched a petition to clear up the sites.

"The petition will be to ask the council to serve an enforcement notice on the two different owners of the plots," he said. "They will be asking them to tidy up the land up, which is unpleasant for people to look at when passing by.

"I think it wouldn't cost too much money to turn the flat land into a car park," he added.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for economic development, said there was an 'active and positive dialogue' with the site owners.

College and club kick off new academy of football

A NEW football academy which is a partnership between Dudley College and Stourbridge Football Club has opened its doors to players aiming to take their first steps into professional football.

The academy will combine football training with a BTEC sports qualification, giving a path into the professional game, while also developing broader skills suitable to a range of sports-related careers.

Dudley College sports curriculum manager, Rachel Corns, said: "Dudley College has already got a track record of providing players to Stourbridge FC, so this new partnership will formalise the relationship.

"Chris Knight, ex-England Colleges player and ex-Dudley student, is playing in the first team and our current student, Jake Brigdale, is a youth team player involved with the first team squad. We're hoping by working closer together we will have many more of these success stories in the future."

Students will study for up to two years for a diploma in sport coaching, development and fitness, alongside regular training sessions and match commitments. The academy squad will be competing in the Conference Youth Alliance.

Andy Bullingham, vice chairman and head of junior football at Stourbridge FC, said: "The club has had a marvellous cup run and our young talent has been part of that achievement. We have a long established youth development programme and this takes it to the next level."

GP in court on sex assault charges

A GP from Dudley charged with 18 sexual assaults involving ten patients will deny the allegations, a judge was told.

Dr Jaswant Rathore did not formally enter any plea to the charges when he appeared at Wolverhampton Crown Court. But his barrister Mr Alan Jenkins told the hearing: "There will be not guilty pleas to all charges."

The trial is set to start at the same court on November 27 is expected to last up to three weeks. A plea and trial preparation hearing of the case is scheduled for May 22.

Rathore, aged 59, of Ploughmans Walk, Wall Heath, worked at a surgery in the Dudley area and previously served on the Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group.

He was remanded on bail.

Easter musical to return to town hall

LOVE Dudley is staging its Easter production again this year. There will be performances of the Christian musical, which tells the Easter story with original songs, in Dudley Town Hall on April 14 and 15 at 7.30pm. Tickets are £5 from www.easterproduction.org.uk

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MP support for society's family debt campaign

A CHILDREN'S Society campaign to help families struggling with debt is being backed by Dudley North MP Ian Austin.

The charity's latest report sets out the impact of debt on families with children, including on their mental health.

It is proposing a new breathing space scheme to offer interest-free mortgage loans to these families so that they can get back on top of their finances.

Mr Austin has written a letter to work and pensions minister Damian Green asking the Government to support the scheme.

The Labour MP said: "Money is still tight for a lot of families in Dudley, with some falling into spiralling debts that they struggle to keep up with.

Policy

"This report from the Children's Society sets out a common-sense policy to give families some breathing space and I want the Government to consider it.

"I'll also keep working to drive payday lenders out of our town and promote responsible lenders like the Castle and Crystal credit union here in Dudley."

Every year, the Children's Society works directly with more and more of the most disadvantaged children.

It aims to tackle child poverty and neglect head on, from helping families trapped in debt, child runaways and young carers, to stopping the menace of child sexual exploitation.

Labour hold seat at by-election

LABOUR held on to a Dudley Council seat in the by-election for the St Thomas's ward with more than 60 per cent of the vote.

NHS biomedical scientist Shaneila Mughal, a former Castle High School and Dudley College student, was elected after receiving 1,466 votes.

UKIP's Phil Wimlet took second place with 653, Conservative candidate Jonathan Elliot polled 249 votes and the Green Party's Francis Sheppard 52. The turnout was 23.5 percent. The by-election last Thursday following the resignation of Glenis Simms in December.

Councillor Mughal, who lives in the ward with her husband and three children, joins fellow Labour ward councillors Shaukat Ali and Steve Waltho.

Gig for 'Titan of the Telecaster'

AMERICAN guitarist Bill Kirchen is bringing his musical talent to Stourbridge. The 'Titan of the Telecaster' returns to the UK in March. His tour will stop at The Talbot Hotel in High Street on Friday, March 24.

Wife in justice vow over asbestos death

Jeanette and David Priest

A GRIEVING widow is launching legal action against Tesco, after her husband died from asbestos-related cancer.

Father-of-three David Priest, 69, was a manager for the supermarket chain between 1974 and 1985 at various shops in the West Midlands, helping to oversee expansions at supermarkets in Dudley, Smethwick and Edgbaston.

He recalled asbestos boards and tiles being cut up as part of building work, and said he would help to clear up afterwards, his family said.

After being diagnosed last January with mesothelioma, a terminal cancer caused by exposure to asbestos dust, Mr Priest only lived for seven months.

In the last weeks he was confined to bed, too weak to even eat. Robbed of the retirement they had planned to spend together, 55-year-old Jeanette Priest has vowed to get justice for her husband after they instructed lawyers Slater and Gordon.

Mr Priest, originally from Tipton, had worked in the food retail industry since leaving school. His wife, who also worked for the company, said: "He was a stickler for doing things properly and would always make sure that areas were cleaned so the dust and debris didn't accumulate. That was the only place he could remember coming into contact with asbestos."

Mr Priest, who has seven grandchildren and great-grandchildren, moved to Blackpool with Jeanette in 1990 and ran The Andora Hotel.

A Tesco spokesman said: "We take the health and safety of our employees extremely seriously but given this is an ongoing legal matter, we are unable to provide further comment."

Council pays £22k for damage from potholes

DUDLEY Council paid out more than £22,000 in compensation for damage caused by potholes during a two-year period.

New figures reveal 270 claims were lodged by drivers against the council between 2014 and 2016 over damage caused by crumbling roads.

It comes after it was announced the council would be given funding to fix potholes.

Almost 1,000 people complained in total about damaged roads over the two-year period.

But opposition Conservative councillor Patrick Harley said the figures were just the 'tip of the iceberg'.

He said: "The money paid is peanuts compared to the overall budget but it's still money the council has lost. But the money is the tip of the iceberg as there's no doubt even more people who have had their cars damaged and haven't bothered to claim compensation.

"It's a real problem. When they first reduced the road budget four years ago we warned the council that the roads would suffer."

The authority has recently received confirmation of £238,000 of additional funding to repair the roads.

Urgent

Dudley council's environmental boss, Councillor Hillary Bills, said the authority is working to deal with as many pothole issues as possible.

She said: "We have a robust system in place with inspection teams who identify road defects such as potholes, with the most severe cases highlighted for urgent attention.

"Clearly, we have to prioritise the most serious problems above others but we are working to deal with as many as we can. We also have a busy planned maintenance schedule in place including resurfacing to protect and repair borough roads wherever possible and have just received confirmation of £238,000 of additional funding to tackle potholes after our bid was submitted quickly by officers."

Last month it was revealed millions was going to be ploughed into fixing potholes by the Government in the West Midlands, including £1.22m for the West Midlands Combined Authority.

South Staffordshire Conservative MP Gavin Williamson said: "The state of our roads is consistently raised with me by residents and remains a great source of frustration for drivers."

Shock at 'violation' of church

Disgusting – the scene in the church after the raiders struck at Christ Church in Coseley

HEARTLESS thieves broke into a church in the Black Country in a raid labelled 'disgusting' by a church leader.

Christ Church in Coseley was ransacked by raiders during the break-in, which is believed to have happened in the early hours of Monday.

Pictures posted online show the aftermath of the burglary, which Reverend Emma Stanford said felt like it had 'violated' the church after the crooks made off with a selection of silver items.

Rev Stanford paid tribute to members of the community for rallying around in support after the shocking incident.

A statement posted on the church's Facebook page on Monday morning read: "I'm heart broken. Came over to my beloved church this morning to find that it has been broken into.

"Simply awful thing to do to Christ Church and the people of Coseley.

"At the moment it feels like all the glorious memories of this church and the people who it belongs to have been violated. How could anyone do such a thing? Disgusting."

Rev Stanford posted another message later that the day, which stated: "Wonderful amazement at the loving reaction of the people of Coseley and beyond. "

NEWS IN BRIEF

Roadworks start on a busy route

A MAJOR roadworks scheme between Stourbridge, Kingswinford and Brierley Hill got under way this week.

Work on High Street, Amblecote, at the junction with Brettell Lane, is due to last for three months.

Traffic lights and pedestrian crossings will be revamped with work taking place on weekdays between 9.30am and 3.30pm and on some Sundays.

Highways chiefs said the works, costing £250,000, were being carried out to cut delays on one of the main routes in and out of Stourbridge.

Arrest warrant over dog incident

AN arrest warrant has been issued for a man accused of being in charge of a dog that attacked an assistance dog.

Darren Sharpe, aged 46, of Brooke Street, Dudley, was due to appear at Dudley Magistrates' Court on Thursday, following an alleged attack in the High Street on January 16 involving a Staffordshire bull terrier attacking a German shepherd cross assistance dog.

A warrant for Sharpe's arrest was issued by the district judge because he failed to turn up to magistrates court to answer the charge.

Council staff set for strike ballot

COUNCIL workers in Dudley are set to vote on whether to strike over proposed changes to their working conditions.

Staff rejected proposals put forward by council bosses, which could see some workers made to pay for parking and mileage allowances slashed, in an initial ballot to 'test the water'.

Unite union said workers would be balloted on whether to strike if the council does not back down on changes which affect 280 staff.

Beacon help getting to grips with technology

SOME of the latest technology innovations will be showcased at an event next week.

The Beacon Centre in Sedgley is hosting a tech week from Monday to February this week. It aims to take away the fear factor that some people have about using some of the latest gadgets.

The free event will showcase a wide range of equipment and technology which mainly, but not exclusively, supports those with sight loss.

Care on the agenda

DUDLEY Council will make a presentation at a conference to show how care is conducted in the borough. The National Care Association hosts the spring conference Promoting Dignity in Care, with the National Dignity Council, on March 16 at The Regis Conference and Banqueting Centre.

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Focus on health and happiness

DUDLEY and Walsall Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust will celebrate International Happiness Day on March 16.

The trust is holding a Mental Health Forum focusing on maintaining mental health and wellbeing. The forum, which takes place quarterly, will be held at Brierley Hill Civic Hall in Bank Street, between 11am and 1pm.

A free lunch will be provided. Booking is required.

Email communication@dwmh.nhs.uk, or call 01384 325015.

Gold warning at Hindu festivals

POLICE have issued a warning for Hindu festival goers to keep their gold secure.

Two festivals – Maha Shivaratri this weekend and Holi in March – traditionally see Hindus wear lots of gold as part of the celebrations.

But in previous years this has led to an increase in burglaries as valuables like gold are then left on display or unsecured.

Police said people should keep their valuables in a home safe and to photograph them to assist in identification if stolen.

Sixty call-outs to cannabis fires

FIREFIGHTERS in the West Midlands were called to 60 blazes involving cannabis last year, at 'factories' where it was being grown.

West Midlands Fire Service spokesman Neil Spencer said: "Cannabis 'factories' can be incredibly dangerous places for our firefighters to enter. Criminals bypass the power supply, make unsafe structural alterations, and fill the premises with growing equipment that uses loads of electricity."

Talks over free toll during emergencies

THE West Midlands Combined Authority has confirmed it is in talks with the Government to give the region powers over the M6 Toll.

Bosses want control over removing the toll when major accidents occur on other major local routes. Currently the route's operators have the powers to lift the toll in times of emergency.

WMCA's transport chief Councillor Roger Lawrence said: "We want to be able to push the button to switch to free mode in the event of problems."

BT traineeships offer

BT is offering seven-week traineeships for 30 young people, aged 16 to 24. They are at Providence Place,West Bromwich, from March 14, and from May 9 at Goodall Street, Walsall.

Visit: www.btplc.com/Careercentre/WorkReady/ApplyforaBTtraineeship/index.htm

Man threatened to kill his ex-partner

A FATHER threatened to kill his ex-partner with a knife while their two young children were in the house.

James Hawkins, of Duke Street, Lower Gornal, threatened Rachel While while grasping a bread knife.

Wolverhampton Crown Court was told the pair's two children, aged one and four, were in the property as the attack took place on December 15. Ms While – who has been in an on-off relationship with Hawkins for five years – phoned the police and he left.

Officers found the 34-year-old drunk behind the wheel of his car.

Hawkins was given a 20-month prison sentence, suspended for two years, and told to pay £150 in compensation to his victim. He was also disqualified from driving for three years.

Recorder Justin Widoger, passing sentence, said: "This was an utterly disgraceful piece of behaviour." Mr Charles Crinion, prosecuting, said Hawkins and Ms While had met by chance on the morning of the attack in Dudley High Street. There was an argument and Hawkins swore at her.

He later turned up at her home later and burst into the bathroom as she was having a bath, with a bread knife in his hand, and threatened to slit her throat. She reached for a mobile phone in her dressing gown and said she was calling police. Then Hawkins threatened to harm her older children from a previous relationship.

Hawkins avoided going behind bars after Ms While said her children were missing their father. He had pleaded guilty to two counts of making a threat to kill, of drink driving and of damaging property.

Tank is a big tribute to unsung heroes like Stan

By Marion Brennan

THE story of a Second World War hero – who was awarded a Distinguished Service Medal but never spoke of it – has re-emerged after a flurry of interest on social media in a British Army tank that is parked on a Black Country industrial estate.

The 60-ton Chieftain tank was placed there by site owner Tony Whittaker more than 20 years ago for a very special reason – and now a new generation is learning about its origins.

"I first knew about it when I went to the bank last week and the girl behind the counter said 'I've seen your tank on Facebook'," said Mr Whittacker. "After that a few people asked me about it."

The 72-year-old businessman bought the tank in 1994 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings – in particular, one man's part in it.

Sergeant Major Stanley Longmore had been despatched to the Normandy beaches in 1944 after distinguishing himself in the Battle of El Alamein, a British victory which turned the tide in the North African Campaign.

When he returned to civvy street, he got a job as a moulder in a brickyard in The Delph, Brierley Hill, where Tony, then aged 15, was apprenticed to him.

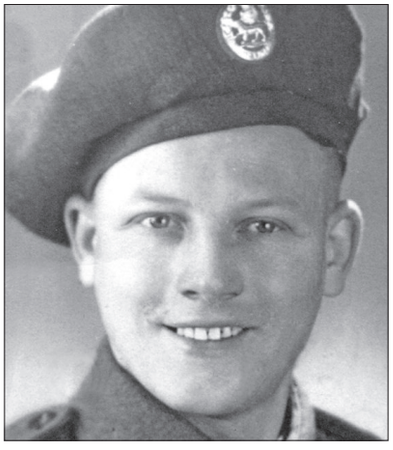
Saved

Two years later, the teenager saved Stan's life after rescuing him from a river in Hereford where they were fishing. Thirty years later, Tony was rewarded for his good deed when he was contacted by his widow to tell him Stanley had died and left him his wartime medals in his will as a thank you 'for saving my life.'

"I never knew what he'd done in the war, much less that he'd received the DSM from the King at Buckingham Palace. He never talked about it," said Tony, who lives in Wall Heath.

"There aren't enough Stan Longmores in this world so when I had the opportunity to buy the tank around the time of the D-Day landings anniversary, I took it, and put it on the industrial estate in honour of Stan and those like him."

Tony Whittaker holds a photo of Stan whilst son Steve Whittaker stands on Brierley Hill landmark, the Chieftan Tank



Sgt Major Stanley Longmore during the war years

For distinguished conduct – one of Stan's war medals

Vicious taxi robber is caught by her giggle

A VICIOUS robber who slashed the face of a taxi driver to steal his earnings has been jailed – after she was caught by a sharp-thinking West Midlands Police officer who recognised her distinctive voice.

Pc Andy Cleaver managed to identify Jessica Buchanan after hearing her voice recorded on the dash camera of the victim's vehicle.

A knife was found in Buchanan's bag after she was arrested.

The 21-year-old initially denied any involvement in the robbery off New Birmingham Road, Tividale, which saw the taxi driver have a knife pushed against his neck and leaving him with scarring to the nose and lip following a struggle.

Audio captured on the dash cam and the victim's phone caught her giggling as she made off with £75 in the early hours of May 18.

Guilty

Buchanan, of no fixed address, went on to plead guilty to robbery at Wolverhampton Crown Court and was jailed for four years and 10 months.

PC Cleaver said: "The only evidence we had to go on was the audio and her voice must have just stuck in my mind. I just knew she was the taxi robber when she started talking.

"Although our team wasn't leading the investigation the sound captured on the dash cam and mobile phone was shared with us as neighbourhood officers in the area. Thankfully it paid off."

Bird's eye view of nature in talk

A NATURE writer will give a talk at a Black Country library about his travels around Britain.

Matt Merritt, nature writer and editor of Bird Watching magazine, will visit Stourbridge Library on Wednesday, March 1. Mr Merritt's latest work, A Sky Full of Birds, documents his travels around Britain.

The author is also a poet with two collections, The Elephant Tests,and Hydrodaktulopsychicharmonica, both published in the West Midlands by Nine Arches Press.

All of his books are available to borrow from Dudley libraries.

The event starts at 6.30pm. Tickets are £3 including refreshments. To book call in at the library or phone (01384) 812945.

Two people taken to hospital after crash

TWO people were taken to hospital after three cars crashed in Netherton.

A male driver had to be cut from his vehicle and taken to Russells Hall Hospital. A woman motorist was also taken to hospital after the accident in St Peter's Road on February 14

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Retail giant is named and shamed over wages

RETAIL giant Debenhams has failed to pay nearly 12,000 of its staff the minimum wage required by law.

The firm has been 'named and shamed' by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy alongside 359 others that underpaid their workers the national minimum or living wage.

It was by the far the biggest offender on the list having failed to pay £134,894.83 to 11,858 workers.

A Debenhams spokesman said: "Debenhams made a technical error in its payroll calculations, which resulted in an average underpayment of around £10 per person to the affected colleagues in 2015.

"As a responsible employer, Debenhams is committed to the national minimum wage, and as soon as the error was identified by a routine HMRC audit last year, we reimbursed all those affected.

"We have apologised to all our colleagues affected and taken steps to ensure it cannot happen again."

Debenhams has stores in Walsall, Kidderminster, Lichfield, Telford, Birmingham and at Merry Hill shopping centre. The company is also set to open a huge store over four floors at the revamped Mander Centre in Wolverhampton.

Also been named were: Sara Motors Limited in Brierley Hill, which failed to pay a single worker £4,221.00; Subway at Merry Hill shopping centre, operated by Eat Fresh Merry Hill Limited, which failed to pay £814.27 to 12 workers.

Move green bank over here, says MP

DUDLEY North MP Ian Austin is calling on the Government to move its Green Investment Bank to the West Midlands, instead of privatising it.

The bank was launched by the Government in 2012 with £3 billion in funding to invest in renewable energy and other low-carbon technologies.

The bank could now be sold off to Australian firm Macquarie, with concerns that it could be asset stripped.

The Labour MP previously campaigned for the bank to be established in the West Midlands to bring new businesses and jobs to the region. He has now written to Chancellor Philip Hammond urging him to consider relocation to the West Midlands while saving money on rent and staffing costs.

Venue set to host card game Magic

MORE than 3,000 trading card fans are expected to converge on Birmingham NEC for Magic: The Gathering Grand Prix fron August 11 to 13. It celebrates card game Magic, which has more than 20 million players.

£1m deal to secure future of indoor market

Brierley Hill Market is set to get a revamp

BRIERLEY Hill's historic market hall is set to be sold for around £1 million.

An agreement has been reached over the landmark building in a deal to pave the way for fresh investment in the indoor market and end uncertainty over its future.

It will be taken over by a consortium comprising of some of the current owners, meaning it will remain in the family which has owned it for almost a century.

The deal, which is expected to be completed in the coming weeks, brings assurances for traders about their future on High Street. There had been concerns what the building changing hands could mean for the town's indoor market.

Investment

Market manager Steve Banks said: "It is very positive news and means there will be new investment in the building itself.

"Money will be put into new facilities once everything is complete.

"Things are getting more buoyant in there. Traders are more positive about the place and hopefully that will come through to the customers."

Mr Banks said upgrades at the market would include new ground floor toilets, including disabled facilities, as well as improvements to the outdoor market.

A letter has been sent out to traders from Mr Banks and fellow market manager Wayne Jones. It said: "We can confirm that the sale of the market is proceeding and will soon come to completion." Brierley Hill councillor Rachel Harris said the news was a huge boost for the town

Mother-to-be was hit in the face by ex-boyfriend

A HEAVILY pregnant woman was punched in the face by her former partner, despite a restraining order being in place against him.

Chantelle Witton was attacked in her Brierley Hill home by Ryan Jones, 21, the father of her three-year-old son.

Wolverhampton Crown Court heard that she was seven months pregnant when the attack took place on November 18, 2016.

The attack was the latest in a string of incidents of abuse and harassment by Jones towards Ms Witton. The court heard that he had persisted in bothering her since the restraining order was imposed in May 2014.

Miss Elizabeth Power, defending, said Jones had gone to speak to Ms Witton after his contact with their child ceased.

Prosecutor Mr Paul Mytton said: "Ms Witton was having a bath when she became aware of a noise downstairs. She went to see what it was and found the defendant sat on her settee in breach of the restraining order preventing him from contacting her.

"She wanted him to go but he wouldn't. She was scared. He followed her about the house and upstairs. There was an argument and he punched her in the face and she fell onto the bed.

"There is reference in her statement to a further incident in the bathroom where she had gone to hide and a suggestion he kicked the bathroom door and grabbed her. Ms Witton was crying through all of this."

Injuries

Ms Witton suffered injuries to her hip and forehead in the attack.

The court heard that the restraining order was initially imposed after Jones assaulted Ms Witton and bit her on the cheek. He has further convictions for assaulting and harassing her, and just last year received a suspended sentence for an assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

Mitigating on Jones' behalf, Miss Power, added: "He went there to find out about his son. There was an argument and it escalated and he accepts he struck her in the face causing injury."

Jones, of no fixed address, pleaded guilty to assault occasioning actual bodily harm and breaching a restraining order.

Recorder Martin Wasik sentenced him to 12 months behind bars.

Boxing club revamp is a knockout

Coaches Rich Johnson, Dale Flute, Paul Gough and Mitchel Pearce with members of Priory Park Boxing Club

A REVAMP of Priory Park Boxing Club in Dudley has taken place thanks to grants.

The refurbishment of the Dudley club has been funded by money raised through community campaigns and sponsorships from businesses. This included £50,000 from Sport England, secured with help from Dudley North MP Ian Austin. A total of £10,450 was also raised through the Castle and Priory Ward community forum.

Owner Paul Gough has run the club for more than 20 years. "The revamp has helped the community tremendously," said the 51-year-old, from Dudley. "Our class sizes are increasing and we are able to take on more kids and help keep them off the streets. We are also getting more boxers who fight on cards.

"Our members have gone up from 45 to 70, but I expect that number to grow to more than 100 in a few months. We are lucky we have got good people behind us."

A new 18-foot boxing ring sits proudly in the gym, while the changing rooms have been upgraded and the gym extended with new training facilities.

Councillor Ken Finch, who helps run the community forum with fellow councillors Margaret Aston and Alan Finch, said: "I am excited for the future of the boxing club."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Mayor ready to flip in contest

THE Mayor of Dudley is set to take on his deputy in a pancake flipping contest as part of a free pancake family fun day at the Moor Shopping Centre in Brierley Hill on Saturday.

A pancake flipping challenge will see who can flip the most pancakes in one minute in return for prizes.

Mayor, Councillor Mohammed Hanif, and deputy mayor, Cuncillor Dave Tyler, will go head-to-head on stage at noon.

A chef will serve up pancakes. Gluten and dairy-free versions will also be available.

Bridal business in running for award

A BRIDAL business near Stourbridge has been shortlisted for a national wedding award.

Worn With Love Bridal, based in Hagley, is a finalist in the Wedding Dress and Accessories Supplier of the Year category in the Bridebook.co.uk Wedding Awards 2017.

Shop owner Claire Ingramr, said she set up the business in 2009 so brides on a budget can pick up dresses that are more affordable, going full time in 2015. Thousands of votes are being cast and winners will be announced next week.

Stalls needed at day for under-5s

STALLHOLDERS are being offered the chance to be a part of the annual under 5s day at Himley Hall in June.

The popular family event, which features activities and entertainment for under-5s, saw a record number of 4,400 visitors at last summer's event.

Organisations and businesses offering products relating to children, such as toys, clothing or information, are welcome at the June 23 event. To apply for a stall, email dawn.a.smith@dudley.gov.uk or call (01384) 817817.

Theatre company are to stage whodunnit

STOURBRIDGE Theatre Company has chosen an Agatha Christie murder mystery for its latest production.

And Then There Were None is being staged in Stourbridge Town Hall from April 6 to 8 at 7.30pm. The writer adapted her 1939 novel for the stage in 1943 and it was previously staged by the town's drama company in 2005.

Tickets are £10 on 0333 6663366 or from the website www.stourbridgetheatre.co.uk or the French Deli in Stourbridge town centre.

Double decade disco

THE next Ultimate Entertainments event at Brierley Hill Civic Hill will be an 80s versus 90s disco tomorrow (Friday).

The double decade disco at the venue on Bank Street will feature 20 years of classic pop music. Tickets are £6 on the door, call (01384) 573381.

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HOME VISITS AVAILABLE

IN MY VIEW
with Mark Andrews

Ghosts? No real scary thing is Blair's back

FIGURES revealed under the Freedom of Information Act revealed that over a three-year period West Midlands Police received 15 reports of ghosts, 55 of witches, and two zombies.

My initial reaction was what a waste of valuable police time, probably down to adolescent students with too much time on their hands, or daft drunks and druggies who think they see people coming back from the dead all the time.

THEN I heard that Tony Blair was making a comeback in an attempt to stop Britain from leaving the EU. Suddenly the world seems a much scarier place.

❒❒❒

AN official from the local NUT was on local radio recently painting a bleak picture indeed about cutbacks to education budgets in the area.

"We could soon be getting to the point where schools can't afford classroom assistants, and there are no educational psychologists," she said in almost funereal tones.

Maybe I'm out of the loop, but I never even knew there was such a thing as an educational psychologist in your average school. And when I was at school there was no such thing as a classroom assistant. Unless you counted the milk monitor.

Of course, it is always a tragedy when somebody faces losing their job, and the teaching unions are there to represent their members.But trying to paint it as the end of the education system smacks of hyperbole. By the way, hyperbole is like exaggeration. If you went to a school without psychologists or classroom assistants.

❒❒❒

NATIONAL Geographic explorer Daniel Raven-Ellison has been on a walk. A rather long walk. Just over 1,047 miles to be precise, around every city and national park in Great Britain. And out of all of these places, where does he like best?

"The wilderness and scenery makes Dudley one of the best places I've been in the UK," he says.

Wilderness? To be honest, I thought they had put a stop to that sort of thing when they closed the old Goldsmith's nightclub back in the 90s.

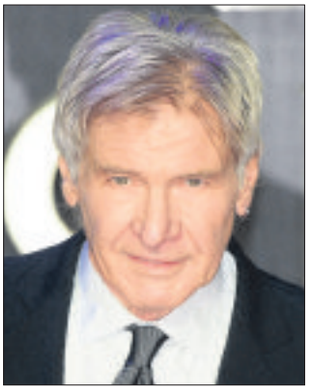
He carried out his research by wandering around with a set of electrodes on his head, which looks like some kind of sci-fi torture device from an episode of The Avengers. He said the brain sensors detected "high levels of interest".

I bet they did. But it's much harder doing your shopping on a Saturday afternoon.

❒❒❒

SPOTTED an intriguing sign directing me towards "adult snacks" at my local supermarket. Can't tell you how disappointed I was when I found they were just fancy crisps.

Audit on ministers' vehicles showed 200 had gone



Pilot Harrison Ford: A near-miss or was it actually a near-hit?

Fake news: Type 'Putin is dead' into Google and you'll get 84,000 responses

Mystery: How does David Davis' text about Dianne Abbott make front page news

Days when limos just went missing

THE BEST OF PETER RHODES

THERE'S a shortage of cars in Ghana. When the new government took office recently, it ordered an audit of all the ministers' limos on the books. About 200 vehicles, including 122 Toyota Land Cruisers, have mysteriously vanished. It is suspected that some have been taken home by members of the former government. Easily done, isn't it? One day you accidentally take home an office ballpoint pen, the next a few paperclips, the next a Land Cruiser. One of the former government's spin-doctors has accused the new administration of "embarrassing the country in the sight of the international community" by highlighting the issue. It's a fine old political tradition. If the news is bad, shoot the messenger.

INCIDENTALLY, if you're sniggering at Ghana's expense, ask yourself how many of Britain's warplanes, tanks, frigates, submarines and destroyers are where they are supposed to be, and fit for action. Borrowing a government-owned limo is a form of theft but having half our military hardware in workshops, dry docks or cannibalised to keep the other half working is a form of treason.

GREAT mysteries of our time. How does David Davis' unflattering text about Dianne Abbott, sent to one of his parliamentary 'friends', miraculously get from the 'friend' to the front pages of the newspapers? Unless, of course, some friends are not friends at all, but complete bounders.

GREAT names demand great dramas. How could Harrison Ford fly his aircraft into John Wayne Airport without something exciting happening? The something in question was one of those incidents we bizarrely call a near-miss, when it is actually a near-hit.

AH, the drama, the glory, the power. The steam locomotive Tornado is pulling trains on the Settle-to-Carlisle line and what a magnificent sight it is. I recall a steam-hauled trip on the Severn Valley Railway some years ago in the company of a bloke who once went to school by train. His memory of the golden age of steam was not so golden. In all the seven years of his secondary education, he never once arrived at school with a clean shirt. So that's drama, glory, power – and smuts.

THE Russian news website Sputnik stands accused of pumping out fake news. But if the Kremlin is dealing in fakery, it is probably as much sinned against as sinning. For example, type 'Putin is dead' into Google and you'll get 84,000 responses.

THE Early Learning Centre stands accused of "stone age" attitudes to gender for a marketing leaflet showing little boys dressed as heroes and little girls as princesses. A campaign called Let Toys Be Toys thunders: "Girls are passive princesses while wise, smart, active boys save the day? Very disappointing." The inconvenient fact, as most of us who have raised daughters will confirm, is that almost before they are out of their own pram, little girls want a mini-pram of their own and a baby doll to go in it. We tried really hard to rear a gender-neutral child but at 18 months, on her first trip to the big toy shop she plunged into the display and returned embracing a Tiny Tears and cooing: "Dolly, dolly, dolly!" in pure joy. It is in their genes.

I AM not alone in being unimpressed with Let Toys Be Toys. From a cyberstorm of derision, I liked this: "Where can I find a neutral coloured androgenous superperson costume for my non gender-specific child?"

TESS Newall thought her cherished 150-year-old wedding dress had been lost when a dry cleaners in Edinburgh ceased trading. But after her story went viral, a renewed search of the premises found it. Such is the power of the internet. It reminds me of my YouTube item on malt-based food supplements of the 1950s. It went Virol.

AN Anglican preacher has been suspended after emailing the pro-EU MP Anna Soubry: "Traitors are long remembered. May you burn in hell, you evil bitch!" To his credit he signed off: "Pastoral Co-ordinator, delivering well-being." Sweet.

AFTER relating some of your tales of woe about the insurance cartel – sorry, industry – my own renewal note arrived this week. The premium has shot up by 12 per cent. But that's not the worst of it. What really niggles is that the only way of renewing the policy is on the internet and you don't even get a policy document or cover note; you have to find them in cyberspace and print them yourself. In what pig-ignorant, thick-headed corner of commerce is this regarded as customer service?

MEANWHILE, another reader, another moan. His 86-year-old mother, having loyally stayed with the same insurers for 20 years, was presented with a £202 bill to renew her house contents policy. He went online and found identical cover for £38. He informed the current insurers who promptly dropped their premium from £202 to £64. In the language of insurancespeak, loyal=mug.

TALKING POINT

One word to ballet SNOBs – shush!

I AM a ballet fan, a convert who came late to an appreciation of the art of the dance.

I encountered ballet through my job as a journalist and by the good fortune of having one of Europe's finest ballet companies, Birmingham Royal Ballet, move to my region from London some 27 years ago, where it had been Sadler's Wells Royal Ballet.

Ballet has provided some of my most enchanting nights in the theatre. I have been spellbound by the beautiful elegance of the ballerinas, the strength of the male dancers and enchanted by the sumptuous, dream-like quality of the grand ballets. I have thrilled to the vigour and glamour of Matthew Bourne's productions, including his recent hit The Red Shoes, and enjoyed the charm, wit and excellence David Bintley has brought to Birmingham's repertoire.

But there is one thing that I don't like about ballet. There is, thankfully a minority, but ever present, an element in the ballet audience who seem to resent the rest of the audience.

They 'shush' at perfectly reasonably behaved audience members when they cough, admonish children who don't sit as still as statues, I even heard of one of these 'share not our ballet' types – or SNOB for short – chiding the person in the seat in front of them for having the temerity to be tall. Did she want him to crouch! I have seen them at almost every ballet event, looking daggers, rolling their eyes, and using passive aggressive tactics on people who they obviously don't think belong in the audience for a ballet.

I even heard one comment that it looked as if many of those in the audience were on benefits. They were referring to the likes of you and me. By benefits I guess they don't mean a pension, as sad to say, most of these SNOBs are in the well-heeled senior category.

The average ballet fan is not the sort of hotdog munching, phone chattering, Slushie slurping character from your worst cinema multiplex nightmare. The worst I have ever come across is someone with a hacking cough who should have remained in their sick bed. Those who attend ballet have spent a lot on a ticket to enjoy an art that will, in this age of shrinking subsidies, surely die unless it finds a fresh younger audience.

The moaners want to keep ballet to themselves. Many of the dancers don't come from privileged backgrounds, there are several Billy and Milly Elliots. So hurray for Bintley and Bourne, maintaining high standards whilst creating productions that are genuinely popular.

I saw one of the old guard groan when the audience rose in their seats to give The Red Shoes a standing ovation at The Hippodrome. Whether he thought it undeserved or was just annoyed that his view was briefly obscured, I know not. Perhaps I should have shushed him.

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Time to put the brakes on bad parking

FREE parking...yes, there is such a place – and you will be surprised to learn this place is regularly patrolled by police and maintained by Dudley Council.

There are even markings on the area where you're guided to place your wheels snugly against the kerb to park your car with impunity. Furthermore there is no fear of clamping, no private security and no towing away of your precious car.

This place is not difficult to find, in fact thousands of motorists drive past this area every single day and a further bonus is that this area is right on the high street.

So without further ado I will reveal this area...it's High Street Pensnett opposite Russell's Hall Hospital. I hear you say 'NO, there are double yellow lines at that location'. Yes, there are, but today's inconsiderate motorists appear to think these lines are in fact for parking on.

Regularly I drive along this car parking area and find myself amazed at how many lawbreakers are taking advantage of this free parking with what appears to have no time limits.

I have even contacted Dudley Highways about this gratuity for motorists and they insisted it is being looked into.

So, come on and be fair. Leave the pavements for whom they were intended, pedestrians, or take the responsibility of any consequence that could take place with such dangerous inconsiderate parking.

Don't let a fatality of a pedestrian be the wake-up call you need.

PETE LOWE
Brierley Hill

Fined more for litter than a broken jaw

WATCHING the local TV news the other day I saw four youths going into court charged with throwing a brick at a taxi, resulting in the breaking an elderly women's jaw.

As it was their first conviction, or the first time they were caught, they were given a 12-month youth order and fined £50.

A few weeks ago a pal of mine was fined £75 for dropping a cigarette end in Dudley High Street, no problem with that although it was his first offence.

Back to the court, as the eldest youth was going into court he turned and flicked his cigarette end onto the pavement, as this is quite clearly recorded on the TV, I assume he will be fined £75.

The fact that it's £50 fine for breaking a woman's jaw and £75 for throwing a cigarette on the floor also tests my comprehension of right and wrong!

KEITH DAY
Gornal Wood

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST
Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL
dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Code of Practice: Our policy is to correct errors as soon as we can. The Chronicles adhere to the Editors' Code of Practice, which can be seen at www.ipso.co.uk. If you are unhappy with the accuracy of a story, write to The Editor, Chronicles, 51-53 Queen Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Making a point to help the hedgehogs

WE were saddened, though not surprised, to hear that fewer gardeners are spotting hedgehogs. We have long known hedgehog numbers are in decline. Since the turn of the century numbers have dropped by around a third in urban areas and a half in rural ones. A major factor in their decline is loss and fragmentation of habitat.

We have joined forces with People's Trust for Endangered Species on a project called Hedgehog Street. We ask people to create 13cm square gaps in the bottom of their boundary fences and walls to join up usable habitat, and to ask their neighbours, and their neighbours' neighbours to do the same until the whole street is accessible to hedgehogs! To date we have had over 42,000 people sign up.

To find out more see www.hedgehogstreet.org

FAY VASS
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Speaker Bercow is out of line

WHO the Hell does he think he is? John Bercow, a puffed-up pipsqueak if ever there was one, who has for years presided over matters in the House of Commons, now believes it is within his authority to decide British foreign policy.

Having welcomed and fawned over some of the world's leaders with the worst possible records on human rights, he has decided that he has to make a stand in the matter of the President of the USA addressing Parliament. Not a peep regarding the visit of the Chinese leader of course.

He welcomed the Emir of Kuwait in a stomach-churning address which commenced: "Your Highness, it is my privilege to welcome you here to our Parliament." This is the leader of a country with a dire record on human rights.

Bercow has ignored the first rule for a speaker, which is to remain neutral.

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Customs in booze raids on dozens of shops

A THREE-DAY blitz by customs officers has uncovered more than 10,000 litres of illicit booze in shops across the Midlands – including Dudley, Wolverhampton and Birmingham.

The haul of mainly beer and wine was seized from shops in a series of raids. It saw more than 50 officers from HM Revenue and Customs team up with trading standards officers in each area, targeting 24 shops.

The duty and VAT evaded by the illegal trade is estimated at £20,000. A van used to transport some of the alcohol was also seized.

Deborah Woodcock, assistant director at HM Revenue and Customs, said: "This is theft from the taxpayer and undermines legitimate traders."

Taskforce

Some 10,638 litres of alcohol, all believed to be illicit, was seized. This included 13 litres of spirits, 1,580 litres of wine and 18,100 cans of beer. Of the 24 premises visited, illegal drink was found at 18.

The raids were part of HMRC's ongoing alcohol taskforce campaign, launched in 2011.

By Marion Brennan

Councillor Rachel Harris, cabinet member for trading standards at Dudley Council said: "Through joint operations with partners and our own investigations we are working hard to stop the sale of illegal alcohol across our borough.

"We want to give a clear message out to potential offenders that it is not OK to cheat the system and we will do all we can to make sure people don't get away with it."

The raids took place over three days last week.

In the last six years, customs officers nationwide have seized a total of 50 million litres of illicit alcohol with a duty value of £106m, and fined offenders a total of £84m.

Image released in hunt for suspect

This man is being sought by police after CCTV cameras recorded these images from the bus at the time of the attack

POLICE have launched an appeal to trace a man suspected of attacking a passenger on a bus travelling through the Black Country.

The victim was repeatedly punched on the top deck of the number nine bus by the young attacker.

The bus was travelling along the Birmingham Road in Stourbridge at around 11pm on Monday, December 19, at the time of the attack.

The assailant is described being around 5ft 10ins tall and of a slim build.

CCTV cameras on the bus captured the suspect, who was wearing a dark jacket, with yellow letters A and J on the front, and jeans.

The number 9 travels from Birmingham to Stourbridge, via Halesowen and Lye.

West Midlands Police has appealed for anyone who recognises the man or who has any information to contact Detective Constable Laura Wagstaff on 101, extension 812 3033.

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Stained-glass window is back to former glory

A STUNNING stained-glass window in a church known as 'the cathedral of the Black Country' has been restored to its former glory.

An appeal for around £50,000 was launched by parishioners at St Mark's Church, Pensnett, after a large chunk of masonry fell from a window on to the chancel steps during Holy Week in 2014.

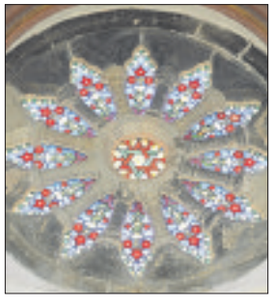
Since then money has come in with £18,000 collected through fundraising, boosted by a £10,000 gift by the late church treasurer Robert Morgan.

However, despite delight over the restoration being complete, Reverend Sue Oliver said that about £20,000 still needs to be raised in order to pay for the full cost of its repair.

She said: "The work has now been completed but we are still £18,000-£20,000 short of paying for it unfortunately.

"It means that repairs we need to do for the rest of the church cannot be done in that time.

Before – the rose window at St Mark's



After – the window restored to glory

Rev Sue Oliver inside the 'Cathedral of the Black Country', St Mark's

Concert

"We are currently having a big fundraising push and will be holding a concert on March 11 with the Cradley Heath Male Voice Choir."

Rev Oliver added: "It was nearly three years ago that the piece of stone fell. It was a shock. But now repairs have been done to the glass, and re-fitted.

"The glass had bowed and cracked. The funny thing is that is in better shape now than it ever was before."

The Grade II-listed building, built in the 1840s, is highly regarded for its architecture and is one of three local churches funded by Lord Ward, the Earl of Dudley.

Scaffolding went up around the stained-glass rose window in September. It was finished in recent weeks. Rev Oliver added: "Midlands Construction did a marvellous job with it.

"We now urge anyone to help us with donations, by either coming to the church for our special events or giving to the Rose Window Appeal."

St Mark is a large, impressive church in blackened sandstone to the south aisle is a tower almost free-standing.

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Canal reduced to trickle by maintenance

Who pulled the plug? But the water was drained away for essential maintenance work on the canal in Wordsley

DREDGING work has begun on the Stourbridge Canal, as part of ongoing work to renovate the waterways in the Black Country.

This was the scene at the locks in Wordsley, close to The White House Cone Museum of Glass

Earlier this month it was announced that the Canal & River Trust was carrying out essential dredging works on the 200-year-old waterway network via Land & Water Services Ltd.

Dredging is vital to keep the waterways open for navigation, as well as ensuring canals are safe and in good order, dealing with vegetation and improving wildlife habitats.

Hospice staff move for revamp

STAFF from a hospice in the Black Country will relocate to another centre to allow work on the site's £3 million upgrade to begin this Spring.

Mary Stevens Hospice in Stourbridge is due to undergo a major refurbishment to its day services unit off the Hagley Road.

While renovations are taking place non-clinical staff will move into the Mary Stevens Centre, formerly the Mary Stevens Maternity Home, located behind the hospice.

The move comes after an offer by Age Concern, on the ground floor of Mary Stevens Centre, to accommodate the hospice's fundraising and lottery team.

A lease was agreed for the premises by the Ernest Stevens Trust Management Committee last week.

The hospice intends to use the centre's ground floor dining room wing for their staff, whilst they temporarily relocate the day unit to offices in the hospice's lower car park.

The hospice plans to improve the dining room wing, getting contractors in to redecorate, create male and female toilets and a new tea point, while the main corridor is refurbished.

The hospice will also be required to make a contribution towards utility costs and repairs.

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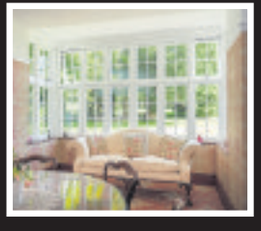

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Rush-hour delays as M5 central barrier is smashed

RUBBLE was left strewn across the M5 after a lorry smashed into the central barrier.

The crash, between junctions two for Oldbury and three for Halesowen, led to major delays during last Wednesday's evening rush-hour.

Lanes either side of the central barrier remained closed off into the following morning as debris was cleared and repairs made to the barrier. Large chunks of concrete came loose from the barrier dividing the two carriageways on the major route through the Black Country.

A light blue Scania truck smashed into the central wall, causing major damage to its front end. An Audi car was also caught up in the incident. Police and ambulance crews were called as traffic backed up at around 5.15pm.

One man was described as 'walking wounded' and was checked over by medics and taken to Sandwell Hospital with minor injuries.

The incident came just two hours after two drivers were hurt in a crash caused by a car going the wrong way down a slip road at Spaghetti Junction in Birmingham at 3.30pm. An 80-year-old man was was said to have been driving the wrong way.

In another incident a teenage cyclist was taken to hospital after being hit by a car in Robert Wynd, Woodcross, near Coseley at 7.40am on Friday.

The Midlands Air Ambulance was called to the scene and landed on grassland nearby. Paramedics treated the male cyclist, aged 17, for head injuries sustained in the accident. He was taken by ambulance to New Cross Hospital.

The central reservation that was damaged by a lorry on the M5 between Oldbury and Halesowen

Jobless benefit claims on rise across borough

THE number of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance and other unemployment benefits rose by 95 in the Dudley borough in January.

It follows a rise in the number of people unemployed in the West Midlands in the three months to December of 17,000 to 168,000.

Nationally a record number of people with more than 31.8 million adults in a job – 300,000 more than a year ago.

Wolverhampton saw the biggest rise in claimants of 135 to 6,565 (4.1 per cent of the working population) with Dudley up to 5,690 (3.5 per cent). Walsall had a rise of just 10 to 4,830 (2.9 per cent) whilst Sandwell bucked the trend in the Black Country with the fall of 10 to 7,065 (3.5 per cent).

Dudley Council finance boss Councillor David Sparks said: "Any increase in the number of people unemployed is cause for concern. A rise of three per cent is alarming and indicates a permanent trend."

David Jenkins, of JobCentre Plus, said the roll out of Universal Credit added to the rise in claimants.

Traders are urged to contribute in town levy

BUSINESS leaders and councillors have welcomed a move that should see trade in Halesowen benefit from hundreds of thousands of pounds thanks to a new levy.

The Halesowen Business Improvement District (BID) aims to raise money each year to boost trade in the town via special events and other ways to promote the town centre.

The voluntary BID scheme, which has now been approved by Dudley Council bosses, will see firms encouraged to join forces to create a single company, with each member paying a levy – a small percentage of a business's rateable value – to finance BID.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed

Members will then get to decide how the money is spent and the cash can be used to fund special events, improve security as well as promote the town and make it more attractive.

The proposal, put forward by Halesowen BID organisers, supported by the Halesowen Chamber of Trade and other organisations, estimates that approximately £120,000 each year could be generated via the levy.

Initiative

Business owners in the town will now be encouraged to vote for the introduction of the levy, with councillors to visit them in the coming weeks at their premises to go through the plans. A business plan will also be circulated to owners to enable them to see how money from the levy can be used for the benefit of all.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, Dudley's cabinet member for planning and economic development, said: "I'm absolutely thrilled that the proposal has been given the go-ahead. It's just so fantastic to see that the council has taken the initiative to improve the local area to invest in their town and to increase the footfall.

"The BID levy will give businesses the opportunity, the power, to harness money in their area for their area.

"Halesowen is the first township in the district to take on the BID and I hope that others will soon follow suit to improve their areas and really take ownership of their towns."

Steve Fitzpatrick, vice chair of Halesowen Chamber of Trade said: "We're absolutely over the moon. This is a real step forward for the town centre. I would encourage business owners to back the BID and make Halesowen the first town in Dudley to adopt the levy."

Pub hit by kitchen fire

A BREWERS Fayre pub in Stourbridge was evacuated after a fire broke out in the kitchen.

Flames took hold at the pub, which is next to the Premier Inn in Birmingham Street, last Thursday.

Around 50 staff and diners were inside when the fire broke out in the grill area at around 12.30pm. Firefighters from Brierley Hill and Stourbridge stations arrived to tackle the blaze. Crews left the scene around an hour later.

A spokesperson said: "We can confirm that the Brewers Fayre restaurant in Stourbridge town centre was evacuated. This was caused by a small, isolated fire which broke out in the kitchen and lead to the fire alarm being activated. The fire was quickly extinguished with the appropriate equipment used by the general manager of the restaurant. Nobody was injured and there is no major damage to the building."

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Charity ball tribute to submariner Paul

FAMILY, friends and comrades are coming from all over the world to mark the 10th anniversary of the death of Black Country submariner Paul McCann and raise cash for children.

They will include Commander Iain Breckenridge and crew members who were on the submarine HMS Tireless when disaster struck, claiming the lives of Leading Operator Mechanic McCann, aged 32, from Halesowen and Anthony Huntrod, 20, on March 21 2007.

They were killed when a device exploded during an operation under the Arctic ice cap. The blast filled their compartment with fire and smoke and buckled the hatch doors so rescuers could not reach them.

Keen sportsman Paul, who played cricket for the Royal Navy, had recently got engaged and when tragedy struck was due to leave the Royal Navy. The former Earls High School student intended to marry fiance Julie Day and move to America.

Paul McCann – tenth anniversary

She and her family will be crossing the Atlantic to attend the ball at the Copthorne Hotel at Merry Hill on March 18.

The Royal Navy team played a charity match against Halesowen Cricket Club in memory of Paul in 2007 which was so successful it prompted his parents Brian and Pauline into creating a charity in his name. It has raised £80,000 to help children and organisations that assist them in the Halesowen area.

Among those to benefit was wheelchair tennis player Jordanne Whiley, from Halesowen, who used the money to employ a fitness instructor and get extra coaching. She said in a letter sent during the run up to the 2012 Beijing Paralympics: "Now I have a real chance to make my dream come true and win a medal and it is all down to you." She went on to Grand Slam and Paralympics success.

Mr McCann, who will be attending the ball with his family from their current home in Spain, said: "Never does a day go by when my wife Pauline and I do not think and talk of Paul. The charity brings us happiness and puts a smile on our face."

Firms wishing to donate a raffle gift and people wanting to attend can contact Laura Payne at lauraseventures@gmail.com.

Book tribute to Sikh community leader

Mayor of Dudley Councillor Mohammed Hanif receives the book on Bhai Rajinder Singh from Surinder Singh

A BOOK on the life of a former borough resident who was one of the founders of the town's Gurdwara Sikh temple has been presented to Dudley library.

Members of the Sikh community presented a copy of Chalda Vaheer Jatha, A Spiritual Journey, about on the life of Bhai Rajinder Singh, a former Dudley College student who worked in the steel industry. The book, written by Mr Singh's daughter, Jatinder Kaur, follows the life of the respected Sikh community figure, who moved to the town in 1968 aged 15.

Launch

Mrs Kaur flew in from Australia for the book launch, following similar events in Malaysia, France, Austria and Germany. Mayor of Dudley, Councillor Mohammed Hanif, received the book on behalf of the borough

Mr Singh died from a heart attack in 2000 at the age of 48.

In 2004 he was honoured when his portrait was installed in the National Sikh Museum in Amritsar in recognition for his contribution to Sikh community across the world.

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Offices to become 66 apartments

WORK in under way on transforming offices in the centre of Kingswinford into 66 new flats.

It was once the npower office building but the landmark building on High Street in Kingswinford has stood empty since 2013.

More than 200 people had been employed at the site but now the office block is being transformed into 42 one-bedroom flats and 24 two-bedroom flats, expected to be completed by May.

Mandale Apartments are behind the transformation. The apartment prices will range from £83,000 for the one-bed flat to £107,000 for the two-bed. The 104-space car park will be used by the occupants of the new flats.

Kingswinford councillor Dave Tyler said: "The homes are much better than leaving the building empty."

Bid to rebuild restaurant

AN APPLICATION to rebuild Hickory's Smokehouse restaurant in Wall Heath, which was destroyed by a massive fire last year, been formally made to Dudley Council.

Clearance work has already started at the site of the barbecue style restaurant at the site of the former Kingfisher club in Kidderminster Road.

The smokehouse was devastated by an accidental blaze sparked by a fault in a refrigeration unit.

Waste site boss hit with bill for £4,600 over breaches

THE director of a waste disposal site in Kingswinford has been ordered to pay more than £4,500 after an Environment Agency prosecution.

By Jordan Harris

Jaskaran Bhandal, director of Oakham Environmental Waste & Recycling Ltd at Oak Farm, Kingswinford, pleaded guilty at Wolverhampton Magistrates' Court to one count of failing to remove waste from the site, and one count of operating a waste site without an authorised environmental permit.

The Environment Agency removed the firm's licence to operate a waste site in May 2014 after claiming there were a number of breaches, including having too much waste on site, no technically competent manager and significant amounts of waste tipped outside the permit area. Management were told to stop operating and clear the site by July 2, 2014.

Flames

An appeal against the decision was refused, while a visit in November 2015 revealed that significant amounts of new waste had been deposited, brought to the site after the licence had been revoked.

A fire at the site in February 2013 saw 100 tons of rubbish go up in flames, and this followed a fire in April 2012 at the site.

Officers served a notice in May 2016 to remove all the illegally deposited waste by November 19, 2016. Officers visited the site on November 22 and noted some attempts had been made to remove the waste but the vast majority remained.

Bhandal admitted knowing the site did not hold the relevant permits. He also accepted he was unable to comply with the notice and said this was due to financial reasons.

In mitigation, the court heard that the defendant had pleaded guilty at the first available opportunity, had co-operated with the Environment Agency during interview and said that he was sorry for the offences.

Bhandal was fined £1,332, ordered to pay £3,265 costs, a £120 victim surcharge and was disqualified from being a company director for five years.

The winning team at Blue Ginger: chef Abdul Kadir with Waliur, left, and Foyzur Rahman

Blue Ginger takeaway a top award

BOSSES at a takeaway restaurant are celebrating success after winning a regional award just 12 months after starting up.

Blue Ginger, in Moss Grove, Kingswinford, won Newcomer of the Year for the West Midlands region as part of the Master Chef Promotions awards.

Foyzur Rahman, aged 25, who set up the takeaway in December 2015, put his success down to his staff and maintaining high quality. He said: "We are very pleased to have won the award. We have already built a good reputation."

He worked at his father's restaurant, Wombourne Tandoori, for five years before setting up his own takeaway, which he runs with his brother, Waliaur, aged 24, and uncle Abdul Kadir.

Meanwhile, Wombourne Tandoori was crowned the regional winner of Master Chef Promotions competition.

New home for cake bake duo

A SPECIALITY cake-making company is hoping for a rise in business after taking on its first commercial unit in Kingswinford to cope with a demand for its tasty bakes.

Babbaloos Bakery, launched by friends Shelley Birch and Deborah Cox in 2015, is moving from Deborah's home kitchen in Lanesfield to a small unit at The Pensnett Estate after agreeing a three-year lease.

Shelley, 32, who began baking with 34-year-old Deborah when they were both children, said they were thrilled to realise their dream of opening a cake business.

"We are bakers and best friends so to be doing it for a living is a dream come true," she said."After just a year of trading, it was obvious that we would have to move now to continue to cope with demand."

Comedy night helps hospice

PEOPLE are invited to attend a special comedy night in aid of a hospice charity

Compton Hospice's Great Charity Night takes place on Friday, March 17, at Dudley Kingswinford Rugby Club, on Swindon Road, Wall Heath.

Lee Evans tribute act Ian Jones will be performing as well as Craig Davies and his Comedy Magic show.

Tickets cost £7.50, from www.compton-hospice.org.uk/fundraising/ or call 01902 774500.

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Tours as nurseries celebrate milestone

THE secret life of award-winning flowers growing in Kingswinford are being revealed as special tours around their home have been launched.

Ashwood Nurseries based in Ashwood Lower Lane, between Kingswinford and Kinver, has been growing its hellebores for many years and has received international recognition for the many different varieties it cultivates.

Now, Ashwood Nurseries, which is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year, has launched its tours of the hellebores' homes for 2017, giving visitors the chance to view some of the hundreds of colourful blooms on display.

Exotic

The aim of the tours is to give people an insight into the exotic-looking blooms and show them how to grow them themselves. The tours reveal the colours, beautiful markings and dramatic dark nectaries of the flowers, as well as the form and shape backs of the blooms, many of which are yellow or neon coloured, as well as purples, whites and reds.

Nursery owner John Massey also has some words of wisdom for those looking to grow hellebores in their own gardens. He said: "Hellebores are easy to grow. They prefer a rich soil with plenty of available moisture during their flowering period, but they also require excellent drainage. They are after all 'snow-melt' plants and, if you can grow them on a slope, they will naturally be well drained.

"It's important to give them a sheltered site away from cold winds.

"Hellebores will tolerate drier conditions in summer providing there is some shade but bear in mind that too much shade all year round can reduce the number of flowers.

"They are best grown amongst shrubs and trees which will give them plenty of light in winter and spring but which will provide some welcome shade in the summer months."

Mr Massey and the Ashwood team have achieved numerous prestigious awards including 52 RHS Gold Medals for exhibits, culminating in a Chelsea Gold Medal and Diamond Jubilee Award for a memorable hepatica exhibit in 2016. In 2010 the RHS awarded Mr Massey the Victoria Medal of Honour in recognition of his outstanding services to horticulture.

Visit www.ashwoodnurseries.com or call (01384) 401996.

Hellebore expert Kevin Belcher gets set for the hellebores tour at Ashwood Nurseries, Kingswinford

New waste transfer plant on the cards near to town centre

A WASTE management site looks set to be built next to land where the Environment Agency is continuing to investigate a huge mountain of rubbish.

The application for a non-hazardous waste transfer station on Shaw Road, Dudley, has been submitted to the council by MT Skips Ltd.

It comes as the Environment Agency continues its battle to remove rubbish left by Rowan Oak Waste Services Ltd, which has become a notorious eyesore in the borough. That huge pile of rubbish, estimated to total 3,000 tons, is just half a kilometre from Dudley town centre, and visible to motorists travelling along the bypass.

On the other side of Shaw Road, inside the Dudley Central Trading Estate, is the 2,100 sq m application site which is currently being used for the storage of skips and materials.

MT Skips wants to adapt the site's use to turn it into a transfer station and material recycling centre.

This would be housed in a purpose-designed building, containing a trommel that is capable of separating heavy materials such as soils and bricks from smaller wastes. These are then passed through a picking station where cardboard, metals, plastics and glass can be extracted.

The application states: "The use of the site for non-hazardous waste transfer is in accord with Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Local Plan, policies and the Black Country Core Strategy.

"The provision of waste management facilities should make a positive contribution to improving the environment."

Dangerous driver was diabetic 'in a trance'

A DIABETIC man slipped into a dreamlike state at the wheel, ignoring red lights and almost hitting workmen and an elderly pedestrian, a court heard.

By John Scott

Gareth Davies also narrowly avoided a head-on smash with a bus, Wolverhampton Crown Court was told.

The 55-year-old later confessed to police that he was in 'something like a dreamlike state' as he hurtled through red lights and clipped kerbs during a 10-minute chase.

Another motorist was so alarmed by the way Davies was driving that he called police while following the red Vauxhall Vectra as it veered along New Rowley Road, Dudley, at about 11am on September 9, 2016.

Erratic

Mr Geoffrey Dann, prosecuting, said: "The car was travelling in an erratic manner and hitting the kerb. It was then seen to nearly hit two council workmen and narrowly miss an old lady.

"It went through several red lights. The man who was following the Vectra assumed that its driver was either drunk or high on drugs."

Police took up the pursuit in Birmingham Street and an officer shouted at Davies to switch off the engine after drawing alongside while the car was held up in traffic.

But the defendant ignored the order and went through two more red lights around Castle Hill, forcing other vehicles to swerve out of its way. The Vectra straddled both lanes of the dual-carriageway, preventing police from overtaking along Duncan Edwards Way, before heading towards Russells Hall, narrowly avoiding a head-on crash with a single decker bus.

The chase ended when he turned into Scotts Green Road and was trapped in the cul-de-sac by police. Officers had to Taser him.

Mr Dann said: "He later told officers that he was a diabetic and had been feeling funny. The manner of his driving was entirely consistent with a hypoglycemic attack but he was aware of problems with his blood sugar level and should not have driven."

Mr Christopher O'Gorman, for Davies, said: "His driving licence was taken by the DVLA almost immediately after the incident and he is unlikely to get it back."

The defendant, of Union Street, Rowley Regis, pleaded guilty to dangerous driving and was given a 12-month prison sentence, suspended for two years, with three-month curfew and two-year driving ban.

Bid to find relatives

RELATIVES of a man who died in a Wolverhampton nursing home are being asked to get in touch.

The city council is trying to trace 72-year-old Keith Dando's family so that his funeral can be arranged. Anyone related to Mr Dando, or has information which may trace his relatives, can contact Elaine Thursfield on 01902 555740, or email elaine.thursfield@wolverhampton.gov.uk

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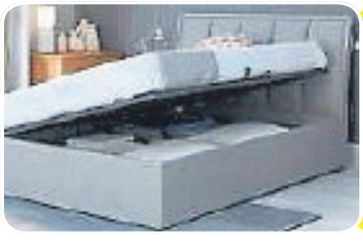

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House prices are on the increase

HOUSE prices in the West Midlands ended last year at around £12,000 higher on average than when the year started.

The typical property value in the region was £181,000, said the report by the Office for National Statistics with other bodies.

Across the UK house price growth was strongest in England, where prices increased by 7.7 per cent over the year to December, taking the average price to £236,000.

Across the English regions, house price growth ranged from 11.3 per cent in East Anglia to a 4.1 per cent in the North East, putting the 7.1 per cent rise across the West Midlands in the middle ground. In Dudley a 5.1 per cent rise over the year took prices to £155,824 while in Sandwell they were up just 4.3 per cent to £130,004. In Wolverhampton prices rose 7.4 per cent to £135,018 on average, while in Walsall they were up 8.2 per cent to £149,268.

More evidence links football to dementia, say Astle family

A DAUGHTER of Albion legend Jeff Astle has said evidence that heading footballs is linked to dementia is 'mounting and mounting' after a new study offered more weight to the theory.

Dawn Astle has called for authorities governing the sport to stop pushing the issue 'under the carpet' after research was carried out on retired footballers.

The findings, from a study on 14 former players, suggest a possible link between playing football and developing conditions such as dementia in later in life.

Former West Brom and England striker Astle died in 2002, aged 59, suffering from early onset dementia, which a coroner found was caused by heading heavy footballs.

Experts said the results of the study provide a platform for a 'pressing research question' on whether dementia is more common in footballers than the general population.

Traumatic

The rate of chronic traumatic encephalopathy, CTE, which can cause dementia, detected in the brains of the players was greater than the 12 per cent average found in a previous study which looked at brains from non-footballers. And Ms Astle said it was more evidence that footballers were at risk of developing conditions after retirement.

The Astle family have campaigned for the Football Association to recognise the impact of heading footballs and take action to protect players since the death of the former striker.

Ms Astle said: "We know what happened to dad and the evidence is mounting and mounting. What we need is for football to do something.

"This isn't a broken leg, people are dying. It is too late for older players, it is about today's players and the footballers of the future."

"It has been 15 years since dad died. This could have been done. It is time for the authorities to stop pushing it under the carpet."

New hospital boosts jobs

THE creation of a new £350 million super hospital in the Black Country has boosted recruitment of healthcare workers in the area, bosses say.

The Midland Metropolitan Hospital is due to open in October 2018.

Sandwell's NHS Trust, which will run the new hospital, has struggled to attract specialists and consultants over the past year, but chiefs said that was now starting to change because of what they are calling the Midland Met effect.

Toby Lewis, chief executive of the Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, said: "There is encouraging news in our recent recruitment of several key consultant staff, including in paediatric ophthalmology, as well as grounds for optimism that the Midland Met effect may be helping us to recruit in accident and emergency and acute medicine."

Town's fountain of success

Victorian sculptor James Forsyth's magnificent foundtain in Dudley town centre

DUDLEY town centre's baroque fountain has been named as the winner of the Victorian Society's 2016 Birmingham & West Midlands Conservation Award.

Dudley Council was chosen from four finalists for this year's prize for their 'skilled and dedicated' conservation work to the prestigious fountain on the High Street.

The Grade II*-listed fountain was created in 1867 by sculptor James Forsyth and acted as a grand showpiece for his skills.

Planter

For many years the fountain fell into disrepair, with its original purpose as a grand water structure lost for over 30 years as the troughs were filled with soil and flowers, turning the monument into a huge planter.

Now, its original purpose has been reinstated and water flows from the mouths of the ornate dolphins and lions as it was designed to do.

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for planning and economic development at Dudley Council, said: "We are really proud of the restoration project with the fountain as part of the wider regeneration of the town centre.

"The fountain is very much a focal point for people in the town and complements the new market place and the restoration of the historic shop fronts, which is so vital in such an important shopping area which dates back to medieval times.

"We're delighted that this has been recognised at a national level but there is still more work to be done around maintenance and preservation to make sure this local landmark continues to be a focal point for the town."

Major success as chef wins top curry award

A CURRY chef from Tipton has been hailed as the 'King of Spice'.

Abul Kalam Koyes from Major Curry Affair, in Fisher Street, was crowned regional winner of Master Chef Promotions after showcasing his skill at Bournville College in front of judges including celebrity chef Pat Chapman.

A total of 26 chefs went head-to-head for one of the industry's top honours. The results were announced at a gala dinner this month attended by 1,000 guests in West Bromwich.

Mr Koyes said: "It was an honour to share a kitchen with so many talented chefs and to be named the overall winner from our region is one of the highlights of my entire career. I'm absolutely thrilled."

The awards, hosted by comedian and YouTuber Ali Official, were broadcast around the world, with global satellite TV coverage from a host of stations.

Most Haunted medium visit

SPIRITUAL medium Derek Acorah, who became famous for his enthusiastic pursuit of ghosts on the cult TV show Most Haunted, is appearing on stage in the Black Country.

The 67-year-old Merseyside medium's Whispers from Heaven tour comes to Brierley Hill Civic Hall in Bank Street tomorrow (Friday) at 8pm.

Tickets cost £19 for the event, see www.bhillcivic.co.uk or call the box office on (01384) 573381.

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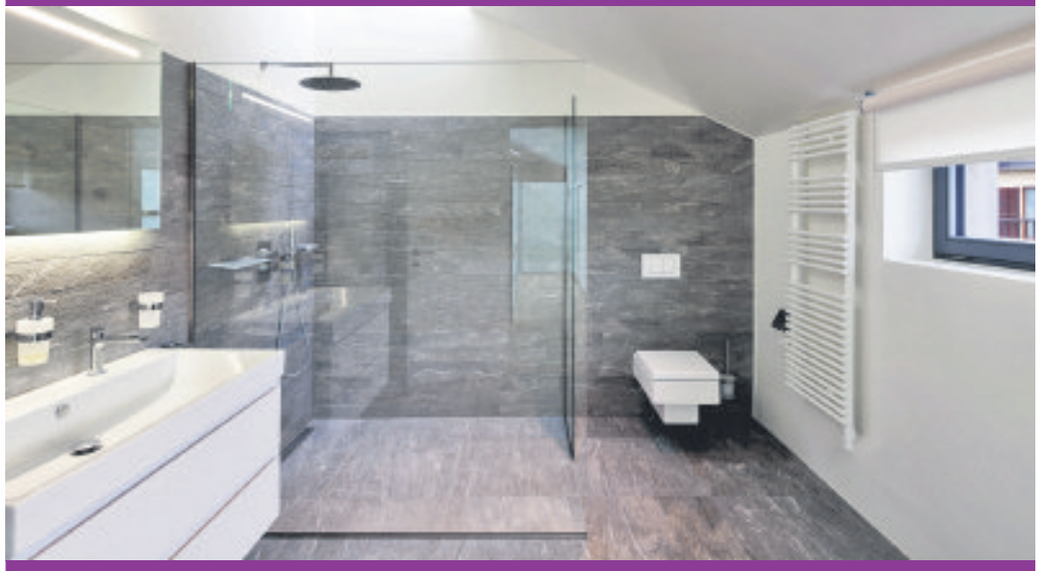

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Norman Powell, seen at the RAF Museum, Cosford, by a Vickers Valiant bomber of 49 Squadron

Norman gets up close to the Valiant, with the squadron badge

Britain's first hydrogen bomb explodes on Christmas Island

Norman turned down chance to be part of history as bomb is dropped

MEMORY LANE

Report by Toby Neal

SUN, sea, sand – apart from the small matter of a nuclear explosion or two, it was a free holiday of a lifetime.

But 60 years ago this month Norman Powell, then of Oldbury, turned down the invitation to take a trip to an exotic and remote island, and so missed the chance to witness history – the detonation of Britain's first hydrogen bomb.

He preferred not to go as he was courting and, as he went on to marry that young lady, it was a decision which changed the course of his life.

Standing at the RAF Museum at Cosford in the shadow of the very Vickers Valiant bomber which had a significant part in his tale, Norman, aged 79 reflects on his fateful choice. I was living then at Thompson Road at Langley in Oldbury, and served 18 months of my National Service in 49 Squadron at RAF Wittering in Cambridgeshire.

"At that time 49 Squadron had been assigned to the task of testing the nuclear hydrogen bomb over the middle of the Pacific Ocean in the spring of 1957.

"The operation was, of course, very hush-hush and us lower ranks were kept completely in the dark about the details of the operation.

Courting

"In the February of that year a number of us young National Servicemen were asked if we would like to be flown to Christmas Island to witness the detonation of the bomb.

"We were informed that we would not have anything to do out there but lounge around in the sun, sea and sand.

"I declined to volunteer because I was courting a local village girl at that time – she's now my wife of 58 years – and I must say I am glad I didn't because numerous witnesses consequently suffered illnesses related to radiation in their later years."

"The nuclear bomb was dropped from a Vickers Valiant piloted by Wing Commander Kenneth Hubbard who was our commanding officer at RAF Wittering at that time." It is this same Valiant which is displayed in the National Cold War Exhibition at the museum with the names of the crew and 49 Squadron's badge on the side of the fuselage.

Norman, now living in Bucknell, Shropshire had worked in the workshop at the base, and not on the aircraft, but was able to observe the V-bombers' comings and goings as they went on rolling patrols to be on constant readiness with Britain's nuclear deterrent.

Britain's first hydrogen bomb was dropped by the Valiant south of Christmas Island in May 1957 and there followed a series of other atomic tests. Its flying career ended in December 1964 when all Valiants were grounded because of structural problems. It came to Cosford in 2005.

Norman, front right, with some of his National Service colleagues from 60 years ago

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More awareness of exploitation

YOUNG people and commuters will be encouraged to get to know the signs of grooming and child sexual exploitation (CSE) during a special week of action.

Advisers will be out and about in transport hubs this week raising awareness of the crime and the signs people need to be aware of.

The team will be at Halesowen bus station today (Thursday) from 10am to 3pm.

The week of action is the latest from the 'see me, hear me' campaign. Dudley's scheme will join forces with Warwickshire's Something's Not Right and Staffordshire's Know About CSE campaigns.

Fully endorsed and supported by British Transport Police, there will also be posters in bus and train stations, Metro tram stops and on buses travelling around the region.

Childline has counsellors available at www.childline.org.uk or find more information at the www.seeme-hearme.org.uk website.

Black Country tycoon secures £2m for online pound shop

THE Black Country retail tycoon behind the Poundland chain is to take his latest venture to the next level after securing a £2 million cash injection.

Steve Smith's online discount retailer Poundshop.com, based in Dudley, is set to expand operations after receiving funding from investment group Foresight.

Willenhall-born Mr Smith founded Poundland with his father Keith in the early 1990s, before selling the business for £50m in 2000.

The multi-millionaire, who lives in Shropshire, said the cash boost would enable Poundshop.com to expand.

It comes after Poundland, which was sold last year to South African retailer Steinhoff International in a £597 million deal, announced it was stopping the sale of goods online.

Mr Smith said: "When I founded Poundland 26 years ago, everyone said it will never work, but belief and determination created the multi-billion pound retail industry we know today.

"Retail has changed enormously with the introduction of e-commerce, each year more and more people are shopping online. My enthusiasm for shopper value has not changed and I am looking forward to taking single price shopping to the next level."

Mr Smith runs the firm alongside his 21-year-old son, Ashley. Mr Smith started out working on Bilston market with his family, and after setting up his first discount shop in West Bromwich, went on to open the first Poundland store in December 1990. By the time Mr Smith sold the business it employed more than 5,500 workers. It now employs 18,000 people, has almost 900 stores and posted revenue of £1.3 billion last year.

Poundshop.com was launched in February 2014 in partnership with Poundworld.

Millionaire Steve Smith

Time to design zoo-venir mug

TO celebrate its 80th anniversary year, Dudley Zoo is asking for its arty young visitors to create a unique 'zoo-venir'.

The popular attraction is asking youngsters aged 15 and under to get creative and design a colourful zoo-themed mug to mark their celebratory year. The winning entry will be made into a limited edition mug, which will then be sold in the Safari Shop.

Retail manage, Isobel Blackwell said: "This is a unique opportunity to design a piece of Dudley Zoo merchandise in our anniversary year and form part of our zoo history. We're encouraging children to get creative and show 80 years of Dudley Zoo in their design,

Application forms can be downloaded at www.dudley zoo.org.uk/create-unique-zoovenir or collected from the zoo entrance. Closing date is March 31.

Youngsters find a recipe for success

Chloe Beswick, aged 14, of Dudley, at work in the kitchen

TWO aspiring young chefs will represent the region in the next stage of a cookery competition.

Isabelle Smith, 12, and Joseph Little, 17, were crowned joint winners of the Rotary District Young Chef final at Shrewsbury College and will go forward to compete in the regional finals next month in Rugby.

Each of the 10 competitors in the regional final had to plan and prepare, cook and serve a healthy two-course meal costing no more than £10 in total.

The competitors, aged 12 to 17, came from across the Midlands, including Chloe Beswick, aged 14, from Dudley.

Joseph, of New College Telford, said he was delighted to progress in the competition. Isabelle, from Leek, said she had been helping her mother and grandmother in the kitchen since she was two.

Judges included Andrew Birch, head chef at Fishmore Hall Hotel, Ludlow, Wendy Barnard, of Brewood & District Inner Wheel, and Tony Robinson, of Ludlow Rotary Club. Rotarian John Sayer, district governor, congratulated the competitors.

Inspectors praise mental health trust

THE trust which provides mental health services across the Black Country has been praised after a Care Quality Commission inspection saw it go from 'requires improvement' to 'good'.

The CQC inspected services at the Black Country Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, which provides inpatient and community mental health services, in October.

Now the trust has been rated as 'good overall' by the health watchdogafter being given the rating for safety, effectiveness, responsiveness and leadership. It was previously inspected in November 2015 when it was rated as requires improvement.

The CQC's Dr Paul Lelliott said: "We were impressed by the trust's response to our previous inspection and found a number of improvements had taken place. This is why we are now able to change its rating from requires improvement to good."

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Troubled prisons to increase staff numbers

TROUBLED prisons will take on an extra 50 recruits as part of a drive to halt 'unacceptable' levels of violence.

HMP Featherstone and HMYOI Brinsford, the neighbouring young offenders institute, could see staff numbers increase by more than a fifth.

The Howard League for Penal Reform reported last year that there were 96 prison officers working at HMP Featherstone and another 145 at HMP Brinsford.

The 50 recruits will be split between the two facilities and the prison service is particularly looking for ex-servicemen and women. Footage was recently posted online showing inmates at HMP Featherstone brawling as others looked on and cheered in a 'fight club'-style boxing match.

Ministry of Justice figures show in 2010 there were 66 recorded assaults at Featherstone but last year that number had more than doubled to 144. HMYOI Brinsford recorded the most assaults in any Young Offender Institution in the country in 2015.

Fight breaks out as victim's friends confront burglar

VIOLENCE flared when a burglary victim discovered that a teenager living nearby was responsible for the crime, a judge heard.

The victim was infuriated by the culprit tampering with personal items relating to her daughter, who had died from cancer aged five, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard.

She was later told a blood stain found at the scene of the February 21 break-in had been linked to 18-year-old Michael Hall, whom she knew was living at an address nearby. Police were alerted when the woman's partner and two friends went to the culprit's house on April 10 in an unsuccessful bid to confront the teenager.

Officers did not stay after responding to the call because everything appeared calm when they reached School Road, Quarry Bank, explained Mr Patrick Sullivan, prosecuting.

Hall's 31-year-old cousin Ricky Smith had also been contacted and arrived with another man to take his relative away from the scene but the victim's partner and friends saw the trio leaving the property.

Stabbed

"Both groups met and an attack ensued during which blows were exchanged between the parties," continued Mr Sullivan.

One of those who had gone to confront the criminal was stabbed three times by a member of the teenager's group, who has not been traced.

Another was punched to the ground and Hall hit the burglary victim's partner over the head with the bag he was carrying that contained a bottle, the court heard.

Miss Chiara Maddocks, defending, said Hall had been on drugs at the time of the burglary but was now clean. She explained that Smith had no idea of the background to the situation when he arrived to collect his teenage cousin. Smith had no previous convictions and had retired after 12 years in the army with an exemplary record.

Hall, now of Roseville Precinct, Coseley, admitted burglary and wounding on the grounds of joint enterprise despite not being responsible for the stabbing. He was given 22 months detention suspended under supervision for two years because he had already spent six months in custody on remand waiting for the case to be resolved.

Smith, of Martin Close, Coseley, pleaded guilty to assault He received a two-year community order under supervision with 120 hours unpaid work.

27 heart attack survivor

Ray Woodhall has kept his football boots because he hopes to play again

RAY Woodhall has been called a walking miracle after he suffered 27 heart attacks in 24 hours – and survived.

The 54-year-old, from Wednesbury, was brought back from the dead after he collapsed while playing walking football in Kidderminster. At one stage his family were told he might not make it but the father-of-three pulled through.

Ray said: "The doctors there told me they've never heard of anyone 'dying' so many times. "

He suffered his first cardiac arrest whilst going in for a tackle playing for Dudley-based Hartshill Strollers in a 'walking football' tournament for the over-50s.

"I felt a slight chest pain but just thought I was dehydrated and carried on playing but the next minute I was on the ground."

Paramedics were called on the insistence of a male nurse who had been watching the match.

Further heart attacks followed with the 27th and final one at 1pm the next day, almost exactly 24 hours after his first.

Ray, whose ordeal happened on December 17, has returned to his desk job at drinks company AG Barr and is hoping to play football again.

Major funding blow for new 'super hospital'

SANDWELL'S new super hospital is set to lose out on £12 million of funding each year for emergency care – a major blow to the facility before it has even opened.

Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust, which will run the £350m Midland Metropolitan Hospital, said a 'scaling back of services' would now have to be considered.

The proposed shortfall is set to hit in 2018/19 – the financial year when the Midland Met is due to open its doors.

The Midland Met has been designed to specialise in emergency care. The trust failed to meet A&E waiting times for the last year at its Sandwell General and City Hospital sites.

Trust chief executive Toby Lewis said: "Commissioner proposals to reduce our income by £12m per year are a significant matter for resolution and we continue to work to find a way forward.

"The quality and safety implications of the commissioners' proposals are yet to be examined. The trust remains committed to making the Midland Met an effective emergency centre for local people."

England icons will honour Baggies hero

ENGLAND'S World Cup heroes will come out to honour Albion legend Jeff Astle at a special event to mark what would have been his 75th birthday.

Sir Geoff Hurst and Gordon Banks will appear at gala dinner at Hotel Football in Manchester in May. Just 75 tickets will be made available for the event in tribute to the Baggies icon.

Fans who get tickets will have the chance to get their hands of the Jules Rimet trophy – just as Bobby Moore and co did all those years ago. The FA Cup, which Astle held aloft, will also make an appearance.

Money raised from the show will go towards the Jeff Astle Foundation and his family's fight for the football authorities to sanction more research into links between heading footballs and brain conditions such as dementia.

Mr Astle died in 2002, aged 59, suffering from early on-set dementia, which a coroner found was caused by heading heavy footballs.

Tickets for the dinner, on May 13, are £75 each and anyone booking a table of 12 will get one ticket for free. Email dawnastle9@gmail.com

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Museum backdrop for Hepworth film

Cassie Compton as Barbara Hepworth in a scene from new biographical movie The Sculptress

THE Black Country Living Museum will provide the backdrop to a film on the life of an internationally-acclaimed British artist.

Pre-production is underway on The Sculptress, a new independent movie inspired by the life of Barbara Hepworth.

The arthouse film, set in London, Cornwall and Norfolk, traces Barbara's journey from traditional to landmark modern artist, fuelled by her love affair for her muse, the painter Ben Nicholson.

Rising star Cassie Compton is in the title role and seasoned theatre actor Tom Lawrence is to portray Nicholson.

Hepworth, who died in 1975, made headlines in 2015 after a battle to get her iconic Rock Form sculpture put back on display in Wolverhampton.

The nine-foot piece, worth up to £4 million, was locked away fafter it was removed from its plinth at the Mander Centre in June 2014 ahead of the centre's multi-million pound revamp.

It has since been put on display at Wolverhampton Art Gallery.

Ticket for a day on the buses cut to £3

BUS fares are being cut in parts of the Black Country by more than a third, while children's fares have dropped by more than a half.

The biggest cut in adult fares – at 35 per cent – affects the Sandwell and Dudley low fare zone day ticket which falls from £4.60 to £3. The children's ticket has been cut by more than 50 per cent from £3.10 to £1.50.

By Marion Brennan

The new prices have been brought in by National Express on journeys in Stourbridge, Merry Hill, Dudley, Wednesbury, West Bromwich, Oldbury, Blackheath and Halesowen.

The zone also includes Bilston, Wolverhampton, and Darlston, Walsall. The M5 is the eastern border of the zone.

Reduction

An adult weekly travelcard for journeys inside the zone is now £11, down from £15.70 which is a reduction of 30 per cent. A child's weekly travelcard is now £5.50, down from £8.75.

Peter Coates, at National Express, said: "Our customers tell us that they want to travel around the Black Country for less. This new Sandwell and Dudley low fare zone means Black Country people can pay local to stay local.

"The new £3 day ticket is cheaper than an hour's parking at Russells Hall Hospital."

Councillor Khurshid Ahmed, cabinet member for economic development at Dudley Council, said: "The new cheaper day ticket is a great opportunity for residents and visitors to the borough to take in some of the many attractions we have to offer."

Councillor Richard Marshall, cabinet member for leisure at Sandwell Council, added: "This is a great chance for people to visit Sandwell."

The new fares, which were introduced this month, do not include Birmingham.

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Ex-midwife Vicki's smile is reborn

MEETING Vicki Ball is all about her smiles – lots of them. She's generous with her compliments, can't wait for her next holiday adventure and has the most infectious of laughs

Her company is light and she's gushing with the praise about her new look.

A retired community midwife who was based at the former Wordsley Hospital, the bubbly 60-something-year-old is quick to affirm: "I love my new teeth and they look natural, don't they?"

Adding: "You can't tell they're not my own," Vicki admits her smile has not always been her favourite attribute. I've always had trouble with my teeth; even as a young girl they crumbled and my gums used to bleed. Even though I was diligent about looking after them, they still let me down," she adds.

Vicki Ball

Two years ago, Vicki finally lost her remaining teeth. "For 18 months I put up with ill-fitting and badly made dentures. My gums were always sore and I'd grown tired of living my life around my teeth. Vicki saw an article in her local newspaper about Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) and his work at the Denture Clinic and booked in.

Vicki's treatment included two implants to stabilise a lower over-denture and the prescribing of high quality traditional upper dentures.

"From start to finish it took 14 weeks, but it was worth the wait. When I first saw my teeth in the mirror, I thought they looked just like real teeth and . . . they feel like my own teeth."

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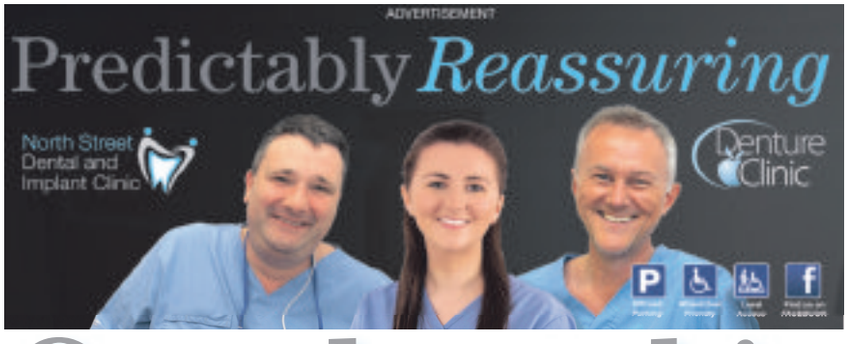

Our dental implants

The suction solution

JENNY (not her real name) was afraid to laugh in public and tried to mask the problems with her false teeth by using copious amounts of fixative.

"In the end it was ridiculous, I was fighting a losing battle," she says.

After seeing Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng), she was prescribed the non-invasive Ultra Suction dentures more than five years ago.

Extolling their virtues, Jenny adds: "I am perfectly happy with the result and I now never have to think about my teeth."

How do they work? A small diaphragm seals off a one-way valve under bite pressure, creating a 'sucking' vacuum between the denture and gums.

The result is a better fit to the soft tissues and improved resistance to any dislodging forces.

● The best option for multiple failing teeth

● Perfect solution for dentures that move

● Best replacement for lost native teeth

● Few unsuitable for this kind of treatment

FOR some it's the final chance of a solution, desperate for help as too many failing teeth have eroded confidence and any quality of life. Others have come at their wits' end with unstable dentures and still more as referrals from other practitioners. However they arrive at North Street Dental and Implant Clinic, central to many of their solutions is dental implant surgeon Dr Owain Rees BDS DGDP (UK) Dip Imp Dent (UCL).

IT'S hard to imagine after losing natural teeth, things could ever be quite the same again. Even the loss of a single tooth is now recognised as a serious life event.

And for most, with the loss of native teeth comes an emotional hurdle – now recognised as a mourning process. In a recent edition of the British Dental Nurses' Journal it highlights the stages of bereavement.

We all know that tooth loss can impact on our choices of food, but there are less visible issues that can arise surrounding compromised social interaction. Simply, losing teeth and having teeth that are failing can stop us living life spontaneously.

Although recent figures suggest oral health is improving, millions of UK adults suffer with tooth loss. It can be embarrassing, painful and erode self-esteem. Practice Principal Steven Burchell Dip CDT RCS(Eng) says: "We see almost on a weekly basis in our clinics that failing teeth – both natural and dentures – can have a hugely corrosive effect on lifestyles."

Excellent results

Solutions without using dental implants have been around for a long time. Dentures and bridges still offer excellent options.

Adds Steven: "If the patient is suitable, and few are not, dental implants whether for single or multiple teeth replacement, or to replace a complete arch of teeth, can offer long-term solutions with generally very predictable clinical outcomes."

For those with prosthetic stabilisation issues, implant-retained prescriptions offer excellent results.

"Our implant retained dentures have a bite comparable to natural teeth, look stunning, appear as natural teeth and deliver the patient a dental therapy where we can categorically guarantee an end to denture stabilisation issues," adds Steven.

All denture prescriptions at the clinic are handcrafted on site in the laboratory using only premium quality materials and state-of-the art production methods.

With more than 25 years' experience placing implants, Owain was in the vanguard of UK implant therapy while working as a house officer in oral surgery at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital.

Adds Steven: "We're incredibly fortunate to have someone of Owain's professional stature working with us.

"He's innovative, accessible, everything you'd expect of a dentist with such advanced surgical skills . . . and a genuinely nice guy to meet."

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Dudley Chronicle Thursday, February 23, 2017

Romancing the stones for a gift to your lover

ANTIQUES AND COLLECTIBLES

with John Ridgway of Perry & Phillips

AS usual we sold a number of engagement rings prior to this year'sValentine's Day but it was interesting to note that not all people still think diamonds are a girl's best friend.

Apparently, it was the London jewellers De Beers who first marketed diamonds as the 'must-have' engagement stone in the 1930s and the idea plainly caught on.

Of course they are still enormously popular and a 'traditional' choice for this occasion – but they are being given a run for their money by other precious – and even semi-precious – stones.

The style and design of the ring is all-important for a ring that is to mark such a special occasion and the colour and set of the stones is very much an inividual choice.

Sapphires, rubies and emeralds are all up there with the diamonds – but increasingly so are stones such as opals, topaz, amethyst, garnet, opal, pearl and even the more unusual morganite and moissanite!

And you can get more unusual 'lookalikes' of the standard precious stones, such as green amethyst and tsavorite (emerald) and blue garnet or tanzanite (sapphire).

Both tsavorite and tanzanite were made famous by Tiffany and Co after their discovery in Tanzania during the 1960s, both are very striking stones and look superb in any piece of jewellery.

Morganite is a very pretty pink to orange coloured stone from the same mineral family as emerald and aquamarine, which looks great set in rose gold, and moissanite is a rare silicon carbide that looks a little like a diamond (it is named after Dr Henri Moissan, who discovered it in France during the late 1800s).

The colour of the stones in engagement rings also (again, according to tradition!) should have a 'message' or meaning in terms of a couple's relationship.

White supposedly stands for truth, purity and positive energy, red is for happines and stability, blue is for harmony and peace, green is for health and wealth and purple is for adventure and inspiration.

Once you have decided on a favoured setting and stone it's time to to choose the ring – and this might be a challenge if it is being bought in secret as it is often difficult to guess the size of a partner's finger.

It's a good idea to 'borrow' a ring that fits and get it sized by whoever you are buying your ring from, that way you will at least be reasonably sure it will fit.

If there is any doubt it is better to err on the side of a larger ring as it will be less expensive to get it re-sized.

So if you did pop the question earlier this week take a look at the lovely vintage rings on offer – and don't feel obliged to be traditional.

• Perry and Phillips hold valuation days, for sale items only, every Wednesday from 10am until 4pm.
• The next Perry and Phillips sale of antiques and collectables takes place at the Mill Street saleroom on Tuesday April 4. Viewing will be during the weekend and on the Monday prior to the auction.

Let's celebrate real skills, not celebrity status

We live in the age of the celebrity

I'VE watched a couple of 'Celebrity' game shows this week. The definition of 'Celebrity' is 'one who is widely known and of great popular interest', but I am struggling to recognise the contestants.

The internet has created so many popular people not actually known by the masses, music stars, those in the fashion and beauty industry, chefs and bakers, scientists, railway enthusiasts, actors, architects, engineers and builders.

We have the ability to show the world what we can do with social media, You Tube films, Facebook marketing, Instagram promotions. Bloggers tell us what we should buy, cook and wear and we believe them. It makes us creative with our thoughts but limited with our vision. Television advertising is cheaper and more accessible. Somehow there is so much information that it becomes more difficult to find something.

I am an avid collector of books, I love the written word but it is becoming less and less popular, the data is not immediate, newspapers are no longer a source of information. We cannot filter what is the truth and what is a façade and we are led into fraudulent situations easily. Sometimes it is just a pleasure to get lost in a good story in a book, touch and feel the garment we are buying and enjoy a film at the cinema.

STYLE FOCUS

with Janet Timmis

The problem is that we all believe we no longer need the professionals, the people with qualifications and years of trade experience and consequently the traditional trades are in decline. We object to paying for a service that takes many years to learn, training to become a teacher, mechanic, butcher, baker, dressmaker, electrician, plumber and the many other crafts.

It is unfortunate that a 'name' also carries a heavy price tag and heavy bragging rights but not necessarily quality. We are sadly subject to a dramatic lack of proof of competence and skill.

I love the depth of new talent out there that can be accessed so easily but it is the celebrity adoration that makes us believe we can do anything without training and knowledge, helped and aided by the professionals receiving no acclaim for their services. We are also in need of finding the cheapest price regardless of where it comes from. Often costing more if it is not suitable or needs additional work.

Do believe in yourself if you have a talent, learn well, train well and make someone proud of you but beware of the celebrity prestige and definition of that accolade, these days the honour has limited timescale, 5 minutes of fame and then another face becomes the popular choice. We live in a fickle and frivolous world, one of vast choice and limited values. We all have a skill, to some it comes naturally, to some it is hard work but ultimately it could be your incredible future. Make it yours not a facsimile of a celebrity idea.

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Nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of people who have made purchases they later regret do so because of sales, says the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute

High price to pay for snapping up bargains

The sales can be hard to resist

ARE you suffering from "buyers' regret"? You're not alone.

The January sales are over for another year – and while some people may be proudly showing off their newfound bargains, others could be counting the cost of "buyer's regret".

Shoppers typically over-spent £78 on items over the festive period, research from Santander suggests.

Walking to work, cancelling gym subscriptions and spending less on going out are just some of the ways people say they're cutting back.

A fifth (21 per cent) of those surveyed say they will even cut back on festive spending in 2017 as a result of the amount spent over the Christmas just gone.

For some, the temptation to grab a bargain can have much more serious consequences.

Research from the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute, a charity founded by consumer champion Martin Lewis, has highlighted people's difficult relationships with online sales.

It found nearly two-thirds (63 per cent) of people who have made purchases they later regret do so because of sales. Nearly one in 10 (9 per cent) say they always, or often, regret purchases they make online.

By Lisa Salmon

The speed and convenience of online shopping with a simple click of the "buy" button can be hard to resist.

Polly Mackenzie, director of the Money and Mental Health Policy Institute, says increased spending can also be a symptom of a number of mental health problems.

This type of spending isn't driven by people being "greedy", she says, but by their emotions – such as boredom, depression or loneliness.

The Institute found around half (48 per cent) of people living with mental health problems say they make purchases they regret when they're alone. Just over half (52 per cent) do so when they are feeling low and nearly a third (31 per cent) do so while shopping at night.

Many people also struggle to return goods they regret buying, with three-quarters (75 per cent) of people saying they didn't return the last online purchase they regretted.

While returning items may be one way to get your finances back on track, more than a quarter (28 per cent) of those with mental health problems didn't return their last regretted online purchase because they felt too ashamed.

The Money and Mental Health Policy Institute has launched a free, experimental tool to help people control their spending.

The "shopper stopper" allows shoppers to set the opening hours of online stores, enabling them to block access at times they find purchases particularly hard to resist, such as the middle of the night.

Lewis says: "Many people shop to make themselves feel better in periods of depression, to give things to others or feel needed, or to fill the time when they're bored or lonely.

"But the boost it gives is transitory, while the financial pain it can cause lingers on and on."

More details about the shopper stopper tool can be found at www.shopperstopper.co.uk

And if the goods you've bought in the sales turn out to be faulty, consumer group Which? has an online tool to help at www.which.co.uk/consumer-rights/advice/what-do-i-do-if-i-have-a-faulty-product

The tool can be used to automatically generate a letter to send to the retailer requesting a refund, replacement or repair, where appropriate. Vickie Sheriff, director of campaigns and communications at Which? says: "If you've bought or been given a dud, it's vital that you know your rights and act fast if something is not right."

You have the right to return your item and get a refund within 30 days of purchase.

Community being urged to back move to save pub

A CONTROVERSIAL application to knock down a Lower Gornal pub and replace it with a supermarket has been officially lodged with Dudley Council.

The Fiddlers Arms, which dates back to the 1800s, would be demolished and a Co-op store and five homes built in its place, under plans by site owner NewRiver Retail.

Regulars at the pub have set up a petition in a bid to halt the move to get rid of their beloved boozer.

It will now be down to Dudley Council's planning committee to make a decision.

Dudley councillor and UKIP MEP Bill Etheridge has called on people to back a campaign to save the pub.

The pub was sold by Marston's to NewRiver Retail in 2013 as part of a portfolio of pubs and has been rented on a lease since. That runs out in December, then NewRiver plans to demolish the neighbourhood pub.

Landlord Roy Pickering says nothing will change unless more people visit his hostelry.

"It's up to the people of Lower Gornal to visit the pub more so we can show NewRiver Retail that the pub needs to stay," he said. "I'd hate to see the pub go. I love it here and all we need is a little more custom."

Councillor Etheridge said: "It would be crying shame to lose yet another lovely old building. I urge everyone to get behind this campaign, sign the petition, and above all, drink the beer there."

A spokesperson for NewRiver said: "The pub has had three tenants in the last six years and experienced a 70 per cent loss in trade over a four-year period."

Licensee Roy Pickering hopes The Fiddler Arms, near Cotwall End Local Nature Reserve, can be saved

No more Ramsden's in the Black Country

THE Black Country's last remaining Harry Ramsden's has closed.

The fish and chips restaurant only opened in Wolverhampton Road, Oldbury, a year ago when it replaced fish and chip shop Chamberlains.

Chief executive Tom Crowley said: "As a business, we are always reviewing our formats, locations and sites. It has been decided that this outlet is no longer viable for Harry Ramsden's, as the brand evolves.

"We are, however, continuing to look for other great locations throughout the UK and overseas."

The firm was unable to confirm how many jobs will be lost.

Harry Ramsden's is owned by West Bromwich-based frozen chicken company 2 Sisters Food Group, headed by Wolverhampton-born Ranjit Singh Boparan.

The restaurant chain started in Guiseley, near Leeds. But in 2011, that branch was closed after 83 years of business. The company also closed its restaurant in Merry Hill shopping centre in 2012 with the loss of 14 jobs.

End is in sight for ball games park ban

A HISTORIC ban on playing ball games on Sundays and Good Fridays at three parks is set to be lifted following a heated debate by councillors.

Ball games are not allowed on these days at Mary Stevens Park in Stourbridge, the Stevens Parks in Wollescote and Quarry Bank and Homer Hill Park in Cradley under regulations which go back years.

But bosses at Dudley Council want to remove the ban to encourage more children to play on the parks and launched a consultation on the issue. Out of 881 people who responded, 88 per cent agreed with lifting the ban.

By Judith Hawkins

The consultation also asked people if the bowling greens and croquet lawns at the parks should be leased to the clubs or organisations that use them. Over 86 per cent agreed that they should.

The proposal to lease the greens to the clubs that use them is expected to save Dudley Council £48,000 per year in maintenance costs.

Following the results of the consultation, Councillor Hilary Bills, cabinet member for environmental services, thanked those who took part.

Shouting

She said the results would now be passed to the Ernest Stevens Trust Management Committee and the Charities Commission to discuss the best way to manage the 'valued green spaces for the benefit of the whole community."

However, the meeting of the Ernest Stevens Trust Management Committee this week descended into a shouting match, as councillors were divided over the plans.

Members of the committee, set up to oversee the running of the Dudley parks gifted by Ernest Stevens, had a lengthy debate and went to a split vote. Chair of the committee, Councillor Jackie Cowell, had to use her casting vote to push through the recommendation that the council's legal services consult with the Charities Commission over the development of a scheme to lift the restrictions.

Challenging the consultation, committee member and Norton ward councillor Heather Rogers said it was important that the public were aware that the council did not own the parks, they were received in Trust. The survey did not state that.

She said: "There is a massive difference between being an owner and being a trustee. A trustee holds land, buildings, and anything else for the beneficiaries in trust, they do not own it, and this council has to support, maintain, improve, and uphold the covenants in accordance with the deeds of gift."

In response, Councillor Cowell said: "What we are looking for is a way to maintain services."

Monarch launch new holiday air routes

BUDGET airline Monarch has announced four new routes to its network for summer 2017 from Birmingham International Airport.

Flights to Split in Croatia, Valencia in Spain, Naples in Italy and the Greek island of Rhodes are available to book now, starting at £39 one way. Monarch will be the only airline flying to Split and Valencia from Birmingham Airport.

The flights will take place twice weekly to Split on the Dalmatian coast, Valencia on the Costa Blanca, Naples near the historic site of Pompeii, and once a week to Rhodes, the largest of Greece's Dodecanese islands.

In April Monarch will be launching flights the Swedish capital Stockholm, a new destination from Birmingham.

Dudley Chronicle Thursday, February 23, 2017

Elephant's ears ideal for sun or shady spot

Bergenias provide interest and colour

BEST OF THE BUNCH – Bergenia

ALSO known as elephant's ears because of its broad, leathery, rounded leaves, this late winter perennial provides both architecture and colour to the winter scene.

Growing up to 60cm tall, some form in clumps, others have a more open habit, and the flowers come in shades ranging from pale pink to ruby red and deep purple. The leaves, too, provide interest as the cooler weather sets in, turning shades of crimson, bronze and maroon.

Bergenias grow happily in sun or shade in moist soil and make good partners for bulbs including snowdrops, crocuses and wood anemones.

GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT – Peas

YOU can make a head start now if your soil is cold and wet by sowing early peas in some guttering in the greenhouse.

Just buy a strip of standard house rain guttering, cut it into manageable lengths and place it on your greenhouse staging.

Half fill the guttering with potting compost. Sow peas about 3-5cm apart, covering them with more compost, water with a watering can fitted with a rose and place on the greenhouse staging.

Once the seedlings have grown to around 10cm, they will be ready to plant outside in a sunny spot in soil with plenty of added organic matter.

Use a spare piece of guttering to dig a trench the same shape and depth and then slide the seedlings, compost and all, out of their guttering and into the space created.

You may then need to firm the ground around them and water them in. Protect them from pigeons by covering them with netting supported by stakes.

WHAT TO DO THIS WEEK

:: Top dress pot plants which are not to be repotted with fresh compost.

:: Soil on the vegetable plot which has been enriched in autumn can now be treated by applying lime.

:: Buy celery seed for sowing under glass in March or early April.

:: Plan your summer bedding scheme so that seed orders can be made as soon as possible.

:: Clear up debris which might be hiding slugs and snails.

:: Continue to firm in plants that have been lifted by frost or windrock.

:: If heavy frosts or cold winds are predicted, provide added protection to half hardy and slightly tender perennials using cloches, netting, horticultural fleece, dead bracken, straw and even old woollens. You can remove them from the plants once the danger of frost has passed.

:: Start to harden off autumn-sown cauliflower as conditions allow to be ready for planting out in March.

:: Plant plump, healthy lily bulbs outside or in pots to provide flowers this summer

:: Clean and sharpen blades of pruners and tools.

Enjoy Afternoon Tea with views of the Italian Gardens at Weston Park

Perfect setting to enjoy special Mother's Day treat

LOOKING for the ideal garden-inspired treat for Mother's Day?

Delicate savouries, dainty sweet treats and the elegant country house setting are all on the menu for those celebrating the occasion at Weston Park on Sunday, March 26.

Guests are invited to enjoy a special afternoon tea served in the Victorian Orangery on the estate, near Newport.

Vintage tea stands, feminine china, white linen, fresh flowers and open views across the Italian Gardens and the rolling countryside of Shropshire and Staffordshire beyond combine to create a quintessentially English experience.

Weston Park's Head Chef Guy Day, who enjoys nothing more than creating the fabulous flavours and visual delights of an afternoon tea, said: "It takes very particular skills and creativity to create a truly first class afternoon tea, with a lot of work going into the preparation. And it's not just the pastries that needs to be perfect but the presentation."

The exclusive Mother's Day menu includes finger sandwiches filled with a selection of fillings such as smoked salmon and chive alongside English cucumber and herbed cream cheese. A delicious caramalised onion and gruyere tart accompanies the savouries whilst the sweet treats include jasmine tea custard tarts, lemon drizzle, honey madeleines and scones served with clotted cream and strawberry jam.

Everything is home-made by Guy and his team of chefs and is served with specialty teas or freshly brewed coffee, or for extra sparkle a glass of prosecco or a gin fizz.

Mother's Day Afternoon Tea at Weston Park is £27.50 per person or £33.50 with a Gin Fizz or glass of Prosecco.

This also includes access to Weston Park's gardens and grounds, which will just be starting to flower for spring, and the Granary Art Gallery and Granary Deli will also be open for guests to enjoy.

To make a booking or for further details call Emily Thompson on 01952 852106 or email emily@weston-park.com

For more details on Weston Park, the historic 17th century house and country estate set in 1,000 acres of Capability Brown parkland, visit www.weston-park.com

Get creative and snip up a homegrown bouquet

ROSS UNDERWOOD

Head Gardener at Hodnet Hall

IF the old cliche is to be believed then this week petrol stations and supermarkets everywhere will have sold out of flowers and chocolates and the purchasers will be harassed and forgetful hen-pecked husbands.

Roses are always popular, especially red but in the bleak and dreary days of February this seems somewhat unnatural.

The occasion itself traces its origins as far back as Roman times when the festival of Lupercalia which celebrated the coming of springtime and more broadly the themes of fertility and renewal.

The pagan festival was Christianised in the late fifth century when it became the feast day of St Valentine, a Christian martyr.

The association of St Valentine's Day with the usual dozen red roses these days represents more a triumph of marketing over common sense.

Yet there is, as so often, another side to the story.

Think about it for the moment when you see a bunch of fresh looking flowers at the florist or supermarket.

Abundant

Here we are shivering and at the same time in places as far flung as the Middle East, Africa and South America, places where there is plentiful good light, abundant water, cheap land and labour.

Bunches of stems are being harvested, packaged and shipped across the globe. Our romantic gifts sit in the centre of a huge nexus of world trade employing hundreds or thousands of people.

Floristry has always appealed to me though I am hopeless.

It is a way of training the eye to see past the simple and gaudy attractions of colour only and instead to look for form and texture as well.

Many great gardeners (though I don't count myself amongst them) have been florists, most notable being the venerable Beth Chatto who began her garden on the family farm.

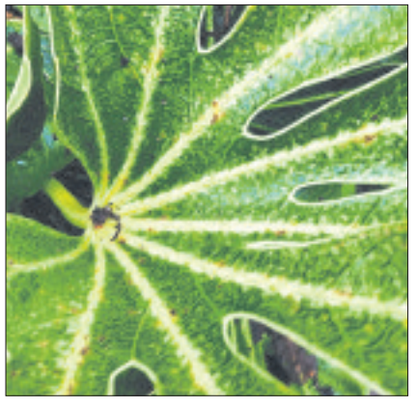
I make a point of visiting as often as possible either in person or vicariously through her brilliant writings.

Her garden always provides inspiration especially as it manages to do so without the intensiveness of either Sissinghurst or Dixter.

If you wish to bring your loved one a token of your esteem why not step out into your own garden or surrounding area armed with your secateurs and perhaps a trowel. Although they are flowering now you could ease up a few snowdrops to bring indoors in a nice pot perhaps with a little sphagnum moss to hide the soil.

Bring in some blooms from your own garden, like this clump of snowdrops which are just starting to flower

Make use of spent flower heads from shrubs such as hydrangea



The large, exotic palm shaped leaves of Fatsia japonica

Hellebores are also in flower though making them a gift is a bit more fiddly as it involves putting the cut stems in boiling water to stop them flopping.

Ivy is displaying its wonderful purple black berries on the older woody parts of the plant and these can be cut.

The shiny evergreen leaves will reflect the light and look good with a few hazel or alder twigs hung about with catkins.

Other winter evergreens are equally as valuable for adding texture.

The large palm shaped leaves of Fatsia japonica add a wonderful touch of the exotic and the shiny leaves of Bergenias which may be displaying rich red or bronze tints can be just as striking and add a textural depth to an arrangement.

Spent flower heads from shrubs such as hydrangea though appearing delicate can also be used to great affect while they last.

For something a little more colourful why not seek out a few stems of an early camellia.

It would be wrong to hold one bunch of flowers and superior in some way to another whether it comes from florist, supermarket, garden or hedgerow it is the thought that counts as Pablo Neruda reminds us true love is much more mysterious. He writes:

I love you without knowing how, or when, or from where.

I love you straightforwardly, without complexities or pride;

so I love you because I know no other way

than this: where I does not exist, nor you,

so close that your hand on my chest is my hand,

so close that your eyes close as I fall asleep.

Percy finally added to roll of school's war dead

A FORGOTTEN hero of the First World War will take his rightful place on a memorial at his old school.

Former Dudley Grammar pupil Alwyne Percy Moult died in the Palestine Campaign in the summer of 1918.

But his name does not appear on the school's monument to former students who died in the conflict.

Dudley Museum officer Adrian Durkin said: "It's a mystery as to why he has been missed off and I can only guess it was because he left the area to work in Coventry some years before the outbreak of the war.

"Whatever the reason, it is only right we set the record straight by celebrating someone who died for his country."

War medals, photographs and school reports were only recently passed to the soldier's closest living relative, 82-year-old Ron Moult, of Pedmore, by a distant relative.

It formed part of a Great War centenary exhibition at Dudley Museum until the building was closed by the council last autumn.

The memorabilia was originally collected by Percy's sister, Ivy, who lived in Wolverhampton, before moving to Surrey.

He served with the London Scots

Percy Moult's war medals

Ron Moult with the plaque honouring his great-uncle, soldier Percy Moult

Saddler

According to research carried out by Mr Moult, Percy as he was known in the family was born in 1886 in Horsley Heath, Tipton, the son of a saddler. He attended Dudley Grammar School, where end-of-term reports showed he was a bright pupil. On leaving, he became a railway clerk at Coventry.

Despite no Scottish ancestry, Percy became a member of the 2nd/14th Battalion of the London Scottish Regiment, largely made up of railwaymen.

He fought in the Palestine Campaign where the Allies battled to make gains against the Turks of the Ottoman Empire.

In March 1918, with Jericho taken, the regiment was tasked, along with New Zealanders from the Anzac Mounted Division, to cross the River Jordan, capture Amman and destroy the Hejaz railway. Success would also assist the Arab Revolt, famously led by British officer TE Lawrence, known as Lawrence of Arabia. But unseasonal heavy rain turned the ground into a quagmire and the attack failed.

The following day, May 1, the Turks counter-attacked and Percy, aged 32, was killed by machine gun fire, one of 1,600 Allied casualties during the four-day battle.

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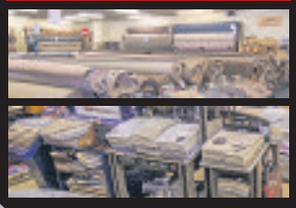

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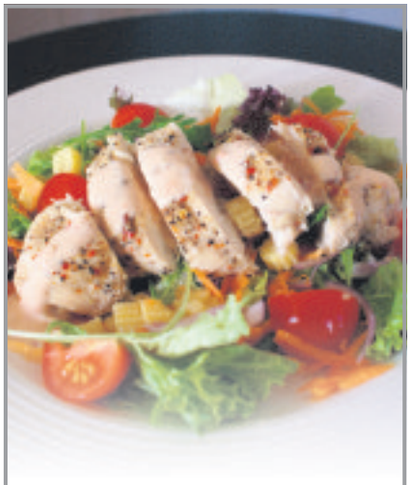

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Specialising in politics and sport, the master satirist known for top comedy podcast The Bugle and working with Last Week Tonight's John Oliver talks up his Plan Z for mankind.
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Tonight, 7.30pm
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Tonight - tomorrow,
The Jam House,
Birmingham, B3 1QU.
Call 0121 200 3030

The Scopyons (Scorpions Tribute) + Psycho Kiss
Tonight, £7 - £8
The RoadHouse Birmingham,
Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
Call 0121 246 2273

The Blockheads – 40th Anniversary Tour
Tonight, £18 - £20
The Robin 2, Bilston, WV14 7LJ.
Call 01902 401211

GLAM 45 – Seventies Glam Rock plus SWEET 45!
Tomorrow,
The RoadHouse Birmingham,
Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
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Quest Fest
Sun, £5 - £10
The RoadHouse Birmingham,
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Metal To The Masses Birmingham – ROUND 1 – HEAT 1
Wed, £3
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Kings Norton, B30 3DZ.
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Stevie Nimmo Trio
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Wednesday 13
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Wolverhampton, WV1 1HP.
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New Alexandra Theatre,
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CLUBBING

Seedy Sonics presents Gone West
Tonight - tomorrow,
The Rainbow Venues, Digbeth,
Birmingham, B9 4AG.
Call 0121 753 1818

Break Stuff – A Night of Nu-Metal Nostalgia
Tomorrow, £4
The Sugarmill, Stoke-on-Trent,
ST1 1DR. Call 01782 214991

CLASSICAL

St. David's Day Concert
Tomorrow, £19
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
SY3 8FT. Call 01743 281281

Organ Proms 2017
Tomorrow,
Victoria Hall, Hanley,
Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3AD.
Call 0844 871 7649

Young Musicians Showcase
Sun,
Bromsgrove Concerts, B61 8LG.
Call 01527 836147

FOLK, COUNTRY & ACOUSTIC

Barbara Dickson
Tonight,
Lichfield Garrick, WS13 6HR.
Call 01543 412121

One Night In Nashville
Sun,
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Birmingham, B5 4DS.
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The Acoustic Sessions
Tue,
The Jam House,
Birmingham, B3 1QU.
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Hannah Johnson & The Broken Hearts
Wed, £14.95
The Jam House,
Birmingham, B3 1QU.
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JAZZ, SOUL, BLUES, REGGAE & MOTOWN

The Glenn Miller Orchestra
Sun,
Victoria Hall, Hanley,
Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3AD.
Call 0844 871 7649

Jazz Tuesdays
Tue,
Spotted Dog, Digbeth,
Birmingham, B12 0NH.
Call 0121 772 3822

POP

Mike and the Mechanics
Tomorrow,
Symphony Hall Birmingham, The International Convention Centre,
B1 2EA.
and
Mon,
Victoria Hall, Hanley,
Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3AD.
Call 0844 871 7649

THEATRE

Knoxville Highway
Tonight, £6
Forest Arts Centre, Walsall,
WS3 1AG.
Call 01922654555

A Judgement In Stone
Tonight - tomorrow,
New Alexandra Theatre,
Birmingham,
B5 4DS.

Cinderella
Tonight - tomorrow, £16
Birmingham Hippodrome,
B5 4TB.
Call 0844 338 5000

Romeo and Juliet
Tonight - tomorrow,
Hall Green Little Theatre,
Birmingham, B27 7RY.
Call 0121 707 1874

Anton & Erin – Strictly
Tonight,
Victoria Hall, Hanley,
Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3AD.
Call 0844 871 7649

Circus of Horrors
Tonight,
Oakengates Theatre, Telford,
TF2 6EP.
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Thriller Live
Tonight - tomorrow,
Wolverhampton Grand Theatre,
WV1 1DE.
Call 01902 429212

Cirque Berserk!
Tonight - Sun
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Library of Birmingham, B1 2EP.
Call 0121 236 4455

The Royal Ballet: The Sleeping Beauty
Tue, £12.50 - £18
Light House, The Chubb Buildings, Wolverhampton,
WV1 1HT.
Call 01902 716 055
and
Tue, £14.50
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SY3 8FT.
Call 01743 281281

017 Dance Show: Around the World
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Regent Theatre, Stoke-on-Trent,
ST1 1AP.
Call 0844 871 7649

Vampires Rock: The Ghost Train
Wed,
New Alexandra Theatre,
Birmingham, B5 4DS.
Call 0844 871 3011

An Evening of Dirty Dancing – The Ultimate Tribute Show
Thu,
Brierley Hill Civic Hall, DY5 3DH.
Call 01384 812730

COMEDY

Standup comedy – Mickey Sharma, Micky Bartlett, Mark Nelson
Tonight - tomorrow, £15
Jongleurs Comedy Club, Birmingham, B15 1DA.
Call 08700 111 960

Sean Lock – Keep It Light
Tue, £25
Birmingham Hippodrome,
B5 4TB. Call 0844 338 5000

Round The Horne
Wed,
Victoria Hall, Hanley,
Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3AD.
Call 0844 871 7649

Henning Wehn
Thu, £14.50
Theatre Severn, Shrewsbury,
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MISC. EVENTS

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David Cox and his Contemporaries
Today - Thu,
Worcester City Art Gallery,
WR1 1DT.
Call 01905 25371

Somewhere Never Travelled – Annette Pugh Solo Exhibition
Today - Thu,
Reuben Colley Fine Art,
Birmingham, B3 2BB.
Call 0121 236 0920

The Last One Standing: The Tale of Bersham Colliery
Today - Thu,
Wrexham Museums, LL14 4HT.
Call 01978 292000

Touched by Greatness: The Story of Welsh International Football
Today - Thu,
Wrexham Museums, LL14 4HT.
Call 01978 292000

Into the Woods
Today - Thu,
RBSA Gallery, Birmingham,
B3 1SA.
Call 0121 236 4353

Enquiring Minds
Today - Thu,
Worcester City Art Gallery,
WR1 1DT. Call 01905 25371

Spotlight Tour
Today, Sun, Free
Ikon Gallery, Brindleyplace,
Birmingham, B1 2HS.
Call 1 0121 248 0708

Fantastic Beasts
Today,
Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre, Craven Arms, SY7 9RS.
Call 01588 676060

Animal Mania
Today, £1 - £4
Blakesley Hall Museum,
Birmingham, B25 8RN.
Call 0121 464 2193

Stitch Social
Today,
Creative Coffee Hub,
Birmingham, B29 6HJ.
Call 01215 727300

Uncovering Mysteries
Today,
The Commandery,
Sidbury, Worcester, WR1 2HU.
Call 01905 361821

Buried Treasures
Sun,
The Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham,
Edgbaston, B15 2TS.
Call 0121 414 7333

Whyley Dance
Tue,
Areley Kings Village Hall,
Areley Common,
Stourport-on-Severn, DY13 0NB.
Call 07939 318973.

Solihull Photographic Society – competition
Tue,
Solihull Women's Institute,
B91 3DQ. Call 07815 165438

Title TBC
Wed,
University of Birmingham,
Edgbaston, B15 2TS.
Call 0121 414 7333

Beginners Embroidery Course
Wed,
Creative Coffee Hub,
Birmingham, B29 6HJ.
Call 01215 727300

Ceramic Crafts
Today - Sun, £3- £4
The Ironbridge Gorge Museums,
Coalbrookdale, TF8 7DQ.
Call 01952 433 424

FAMILY & KIDS

mac Explorers: Mini Museums
Today,
MAC, Cannon Hill Park,
Birmingham, B12 9QH.
Call 0121 446 3232

Fantastic February Fun
Today,
Worcestershire County Museum,
Hartlebury Castle, Kidderminster
DY11 7XZ. Call 01299 250416

Fantastic Half-Term Fun
Today,
Worcestershire County Museum,
Hartlebury Castle, Kidderminster
DY11 7XZ. Call 01299 250416

John's Garden Open Day
Wed, £5
Ashwood Nurseries, Kinver,
Kingswinford, DY6 0AE.
Call 01384 401996

Check out full listings in **the ticket** in Friday's Express & Star

Ricky is ready to run riot at big arena show

Straight-talking Ricky Wilson with the rest of the Kaiser Chiefs, ready to make a brilliant noise at Birmingham Barclaycard Arena on Saturday

DON'T expect anything but honesty from one of rock'n'roll's most successful frontmen of the past 10 years.

Kaiser Chiefs' singer Ricky Wilson is the epitome of a straight-talking, no-nonsense Yorkshireman. If he were a cricketer, he'd be Geoffrey Boycott.

Take their upcoming tour, calling in at Birmingham's Barclaycard Arena on Saturday. For a band returning after a lay-off following their successful 2015 Education, Education, Education tour, you'd imagine maybe a few nerves.

"Well, with the shows, I've got this problem that I'm too ambitious," he said. "I'm always on to the next thing. To me, they're not big enough, I want them bigger. I want to do a bigger tour in the autumn."

The gigs come hot on the heels of their show-stealing 2016 headline slot at V, when they revealed to the other acts on the bill what a real festival band is made of. Ricky had a blast.

"I thought it was brilliant. These days, there's not as many bands who can headline that sort of show. We've cornered the market."

The Leeds band's latest album, Stay Together, is unashamedly pop. Ricky, who became a household name thanks to his role as judge and chief charmer on the BBC run of The Voice UK, said: "Making an album is just about making 45 minutes of brilliant noise – think about it – that's all it is."

Soul sister's brand new act

ALEXANDRA Burke does seem to have cornered the market in playing divas in peril. After around two years in the role of Rachel Marron in The Bodyguard, she is now playing an equally iconic character on stage.

This time around though, it is a lead role that requires a lighter touch in the shape of Deloris Van Cartier, the sassy singer who witnesses a gangland murder and is placed out of harm's way in a convent. Thus begins Sister Act, which is on at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre from Monday until Saturday (March 4) as part of a UK tour.

The revival has been directed and choreographed by Strictly Come Dancing's Craig Revel Horwood and wowed audiences at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre last year.

Alexandra admits she took a little bit of persuasion to bring Deloris to life, particularly as it meant stepping into the shoes of Whoopi Goldberg, who played Deloris in the movie. She recalled: "I actually wasn't too sure about saying yes although it was a fantastic opportunity. I didn't know if I was made for the role. It was actually the soundtrack that made me say yes. The songs are just so beautiful and I thought it would be a privilege to sing them."

After winning The X Factor in 2008, her debut single Hallelujah was a massive hit. Concert tours, hit albums and West End success followed.

Alexandra is keen to create a new characterisation of Deloris and not just copy Whoopi Goldberg. She said: "I always want to put my own spin and my own interpretation on anything that I do because that's my way. In fact, I have deliberately not watched the whole movie."

Visit www.grandtheatre.co.uk or call the box office on 01902 429212.

Get rhythm sticks at the ready for 40th anniversary

IT'S time to get your rhythm sticks out, The Blockheads are bringing Sex & Drugs & Rock & Roll to Bilston's Robin 2 tomorrow night (Friday). It's their 40th anniversary and they want to celebrate.

Formed in 1977 as the backing band for Ian Dury and his songwriting partner Chaz Jankel, they first hit the road with their iconic singer when debut album New Boots and Panties was released on Stiff Records.

Dury died in 2000 after several hits that blended musical hall patter with jazz-funk but The Blockheads carried on and are now fronted by Ian's friend and minder Derek 'The Draw' Hussey. Chaz Jankel, Norman Watt-Roy (who is also Wilko Johnson's bassist), John Turnbull and Mick Gallagher remain from the original band. Tickets are £18 (advance) and £20 (door), see therobin.co.uk or call 01902 401211.

X marks the spot as TV show pop stars roll in

THE X Factor Live Tour 2017 will roll into the West Midlands for a concert tomorrow night (Friday) at Birmingham's Genting Arena, at the NEC.

Viewers favourites from last year's show, which culminated in victory for Matt Terry in the live ITV final on December 11, will be taking to the stage.

The line-up will also include runner-up Saara Aalto, the notorious Honey G, boy band 5 After Midnight, Emily Middlemas, girl band Four of Diamonds, Ryan Lawrie and Sam Lavery.

Attended by more than three million people so far, The X Factor Live Tour, featuring finalists from the popular TV singing talent show, has been one of the most successful annual arena tours in the UK for the last 12 years. See www.gentingarena.co.uk for details.

Marley musical already a hit before premiere

BIRMINGHAM Repertory Theatre's new Bob Marley musical, One Love, is a hit even before it opens at the Centenary Square theatre next month.

Popular demand for tickets for the world premiere of the show about the life of the reggae legend is so great that its run has been extended by a week.

Written and directed by former Casualty and Holby City actor Kwame Kwei-Armah, One Love: The Bob Marley Musical will now run from March 10 to April 15.

Stuart Rogers, executive director at Birmingham Rep said: "It seems to have captured the public's attention with audiences booking from as far afield as Israel, Oslo, Madrid and Hamburg."

To book tickets visit the website birmingham-rep.co.uk or call 0121 236

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Harry Potter and The Philosopher's Stone 2 DAYS
Fri 19 May £139
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Wed 26 Apr	Frankie Valli & The Four Seasons	£139
Sat 6 May	Dirty Dancing & Historic York	£129
Sat 13 May	The Commitments & Historic York	£119
Sat 13 May	Ken Dodd & Liverpool Special	£99
Sat 27 May	Adam Ant - Live in Concert	£119
Sat 10 Jun	Jane McDonald Live & Chester	£119
Sat 17 Jun	Towerfest Country Music Festival (b&b)	£119
Sat 24 Jun	Evita Live & Liverpool Special	£119
Sat 1 Jul	Fantastic Mr Fox & Eureka	£99
Sat 26 Aug	Sister Act & Liverpool Special	£99

NATIONAL SPORTS Sensational Sports Breaks....

2 DAY SPORT BREAKS

Thu 13 Apr	Betway Premier League Darts - Live!	£99
Sat 15 Apr	Liverpool & Haydock Races - Easter Special	£99
Sat 13 May	Liverpool & Haydock Races	£99
Sat 13 May	Women's FA Cup Final - Wembley (b&b)	£99
Sat 20 May	Non-League Finals Day - Wembley Stadium (b&b)	£99
Sat 20 May	FA Vase & FA Trophy Finals - Wembley (b&b)	£99
Sat 20 May	British Touring Car Championship - Oulton Park	£119
Sat 20 May	Non-League Finals Day-Wembley Stadium	£99
Sat 27 May	Liverpool & Chester Races	£99
Sat 1 Jul	Liverpool & Chester Races	£99
Sat 5 Aug	Liverpool & Chester Races	£99
Sat 5 Aug	England v South Africa - Old Trafford	£129
Sat 12 Aug	Liverpool & Haydock Races	£99
Sat 26 Aug	Ebor Stakes - York Racecourse	£119

Truckfest Spectacular & Oxford 2 DAYS
Sat 27 May £99
What's included?
- Coach travel with reserved seating throughout
- One night dinner, bed & breakfast at our select hotel
- All rooms with en-suite facilities
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- Visit to Oxford

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Bavaria Inclusive Spectacular 7 DAYS
Sun 19 March £399
What's included?
- Coach travel with reserved seating on your holiday coach
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- Welcome drink on arrival
- Free bar on four evenings from 6pm-10pm with a choice of local beers, house wines and sfot drinks
- Includes visits to Regensburg and Bavari Forest National Park.
- Free time in Viechtach.

4/5/7/14 DAY EUROPEAN BREAKS

Mon 6 Mar	4	Ostend Special Breakaway	£139
Mon 6 Mar	5	Ostend Inclusive	£239
Mon 6 Mar	5	Rhine & Moselle Inclusive	£219
Mon 6 Mar	5	Ostend Superdeal	£209
Mon 6 Mar	5	Rhine Valley Superdeal	£189
Fri 10 Mar	4	Ostend Weekend Superdeal	£149
Fri 10 Mar	4	Disneyland Spectacular at The Kyriad (b&b)	£279
Fri 10 Mar	4	Disneyland Spectacular at The B&B Hotel (b&b)	£289
Fri 10 Mar	4	Ostend Inclusive Weekend	£189
Mon 13 Mar	5	Amsterdam, Cologne & Valkenburg	£219
Mon 13 Mar	5	Rhine & Moselle Inclusive	£219
Mon 13 Mar	5	Rhine Valley Superdeal	£189
Sun 19 Mar	14	Spring Sunshine on the Costa Brava Coast	£599
Mon 20 Mar	5	Three Countries Inclusive Special	£199

Special Events Enjoy admission to sensational Special Events.

2 DAY SPECIAL EVENTS BREAKS

Sat 1 Apr	Victoria at Harewood House	£89
Mon 3 Apr	Flying Scotsman Special	£119
Sat 15 Apr	Emmerdale The Tour	£99
Sat 22 Apr	Skipton Market & Harrogate Flower Show	£99
Sat 6 May	York & Emmerdale Village Tour	£99
Sat 13 May	Hobbycrafts, Stitch & Sew - Live!	£79
Sat 20 May	Emmerdale The Tour	£99
Sat 17 Jun	Emmerdale The Tour	£119
Sat 24 Jun	Victoria at Harewood House	£89
Tue 11 Jul	The Great Yorkshire Show & Historic York	£99
Sat 15 Jul	Emmerdale The Tour	£119
Wed 2 Aug	Bakewell Country Show & Historic Chester	£89
Sat 5 Aug	York & Emmerdale Village Tour	£119
Sat 19 Aug	Emmerdale The Tour	£119

Harlow Carr Flower Show 2 DAYS
Sat 24 June £99
What's included?
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- Visit to historic York
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Family Fun Great breaks for all the family!

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Sat 15 April	£99	Sat 17 June	£99
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Sat 26 August	£99		

What's included?
- Coach travel with reserved seating throughout
- One night dinner, bed & breakfast at our select hotel
- Included admission to the Yorkshire Wildlife Park to visit the Polar Bears and numerous other animals
- Included admission to the stunning 'Deep' where visitors can enjoy a unique interactive experience.

2 DAY FAMILY FUN BREAKS

Sat 18 Mar	Legoland Spectacular (b&b)	£99
Sat 15 Apr	Legoland Spectacular (b&b)	£119
Sat 29 Apr	Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funtime	£89
Sat 3 Jun	Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funtime	£89
Sat 24 Jun	Legoland Spectacular (b&b)	£119
Sat 1 Jul	Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funtime	£89
Sat 22 Jul	Legoland Spectacular (b&b)	£119
Sat 5 Aug	Legoland Spectacular (b&b)	£119
Sat 12 Aug	Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funtime	£89
Sat 26 Aug	Legoland Discovery & Blackpool Funtime	£89
Thu 31 Aug	London & Harry Potter Studio Tour	£129
Sat 9 Sep	London & Harry Potter Studio Tour	£119
Sat 16 Sep	Polar Bears, Penguins & Kingdom of Ice	£99
Sat 23 Sep	Legoland Spectacular (b&b)	£99

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NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

CHOICE

Gary Barlow

Let It Shine (BBC1, 6.45pm)
The battle of the boy bands is almost over as the three finalists take to the stage one last time, demonstrating their singing and dancing skills in the hope of winning the starring roles in Gary Barlow's new musical based on the music of Take That. He and his fellow panellists, Dannii Minogue, Martin Kemp and a special guest judge, will be giving their feedback, but this week the performers have to impress the viewers, as they're the ones who decide who comes out on top. As to who that will be – Graham Norton and Mel Giedroyc are the ones with the answer. Last in the series.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen Live. **11.30** The Little Paris Kitchen: Cooking with Rachel Khoo. (R) **12.00** Football Focus. **1.00** BBC News. **1.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **2.00** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Scotland v Wales (Kick-off 2.25pm). **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** BBC News. **5.20** Regional Programme. **5.30** Celebrity Mastermind. (R)

6.00 Pointless Celebrities. Toby Anstis and Jenni Falconer, Janice Long and Bob Harris, Peter White and Steve Punt, and Angie Greaves and Steve Penk take part. (R)

6.45 Let It Shine. The finalists take to the stage one last time in the hope of winning the starring roles in Gary Barlow's new musical. Hosted by Graham Norton and Mel Giedroyc. Last in the series.

8.25 Casualty. Steph, the woman responsible for Grace's hospitalisation, is rushed into the ER after attempting suicide in prison. The staff face an upward struggle in finding out what pills she has taken, one which is made all the more difficult by the patient's refusal to speak - and the cold distain of both Connie and Jacob. However, when it becomes clear Connie visited Steph in prison not long before she tried to claim her own life, things become even more complicated. Meanwhile, Iain helps Gem to get a job in the hospital coffee shop, and when Grace's continued silence is ruled as being a psychological issue, Sam decides it may be time to take her home.

9.15 Taboo. James Delaney confronts Sir Stuart Strange with the cold, hard truth, and plans his escape. However, the Crown has one final, deadly move to make. Last in the series.

10.15 BBC News; Weather.; National Lottery Update.

10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League matches, including Chelsea v Swansea City at Stamford Bridge and Hull City v Burnley at the KCOM Stadium.

11.50 This Country. The mockumentary continues as Kerry and Kurtan await the release of their uncle, Steve "Nugget" Nuggins, who they believe was wrongfully imprisoned for "having a laugh".

12.15 Film: Return from the River Kwai. (1988) **1.50** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.55** BBC News.

BBC2

8.10 Film: In Which We Serve. (1942) **10.00** Britain's Secret Seas. (R) **11.00** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **12.00** Two Greedy Italians: Still Hungry. (R) **1.00 Film:** Waterloo. (1970) Historical drama, starring Rod Steiger. **3.10** Natural World. (R) **4.00** Mastermind. (R) **4.30** University Challenge. (R) **5.00** Only Connect. (R) **5.30** The House That £100K Built. (R)

6.30 Flog It! Will Axon and Michael Baggot value items in Ashbourne, Derbyshire, including a pearlware cow and an Asprey and Co picnic set, while Paul Martin experiences harness racing. (R)

7.30 Grand Tours of the Scottish Islands. Paul Murton journeys around the coast of the Long Island of Harris and Lewis, beginning on Scarp, travelling north to Great Bernera, then south east to Scalpay.

8.00 Diana: Designing a Princess. Brenda Emmanus explores the stories behind some of the most exquisite dresses owned by Diana, Princess of Wales, some of which are on display in an exhibition at Kensington Palace.

8.30 Dad's Army. An invasion alert throws Mainwaring's hopeless would-be heroes into a panic, leading one half of the platoon to launch an attack on the other. (R)

9.00 Film: My Old Lady. (2014) Premiere. A penniless New Yorker hopes to turn his fortunes around by selling his dead father's flat in Paris, only to find an eccentric elderly Englishwoman is living there – and under French law, he cannot sell until after she dies. As he gets to know his unexpected tenant, he discovers a side to his father that he never know. Comedy drama based on director Israel Horovitz's stage play, starring Maggie Smith, Kevin Kline and Kristin Scott Thomas.

10.45 QI XL. Stephen Fry hosts an extended version of the quiz with a difference, with guests Matt Lucas, Lucy Porter and Ross Noble joining regular panellist Alan Davies.

11.30 Film: Albert Nobbs. (2011) A woman living in disguise as a man in 19th-century Ireland decides to find a wife after a meeting with a fellow cross-dresser. Drama, with Glenn Close and Mia Wasikowska.

1.15 Film: Youth Without Youth. (2007) **3.15** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.25** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled!: Scrambled! **7.35** Scrambled!: Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Scrambled!: Horrid Henry. (R) **8.10** Scrambled!: Teen Titans Go! (R) **8.30** Scrambled!: Bear Grylls Survival School. **9.05** Scrambled!: Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Alphabetical. (R) **10.25** Guess This House. (R) **11.25** Off Their Rockers. (R) **11.55** ITV News; Weather. **12.00 Film:** Free Willy 2: The Adventure Home. (1995) Family adventure, starring Jason James Richter. **1.50** Tipping Point. (R) **2.50** The Chase. (R) **3.50** Regional Programme ; Weather.**4.00** ITV News; Weather. **4.15** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. Ireland v France (Kick-off 4.50pm).

7.00 Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway. New series. The award-winning presenter duo's weekend variety show returns, and this year, the pair have recruited Gogglebox star and I'm A Celebrity 2016 winner Scarlett Moffatt to become their new co-host. Ant and Dec have teased they have a very big role for Scarlett to fill in the first show, one that involves a very public stunt that could see her reach new heights – literally. The Geordie twosome prank Jamie Oliver in the first of this year's Undercover features, and The Voice UK coach Jennifer Hudson stars in the End of the Show Show. Also beginning tonight is The Missing Crown Jewels, Ant and Dec's follow-up to Who Shot Simon Cowell?, last year's comedy sketch whodunit. Emilia Fox is back to head up the investigation, as more celebrity guests are lined up as potential culprits in another mad-cap crime caper.

8.30 The Voice UK. The talent contest moves into the Battle phase, in which Tom Jones, Will.i.am, Gavin Rossdale and Jennifer Hudson are expected to shape their protégés into their pop icons.

10.30 ITV News; Weather.

10.45 Film: The Boat That Rocked. (2009) Richard Curtis's comedy, with Bill Nighy and Philip Seymour Hoffman.

1.10 Jackpot247. **3.00** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.20 Mobil 1 The Grid. **6.45** The King of Queens. (R) **7.10** The King of Queens. (R) **7.35** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.00** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **10.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.00** The Simpsons. (R) **11.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.00** Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast. (R) **1.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **1.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **2.30** Come Dine with Me. (R) **3.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **3.30** A Place in the Sun: Summer Sun. (R) **4.30** Location, Location, Location. (R) **5.35** Grand Designs. (R)

6.30 Channel 4 News.

7.00 Penelope Keith's Favourite Villages. The actress travels around Britain visiting villages in different parts of the country, and discovers how people's attitudes have changed to these small communities. Her trip takes her to villages in Devon, Cornwall, Scotland and the Lake District, with the help of insights from the illustrated 1930s Batsford Guides. (R)

8.00 Great Canal Journeys. Timothy West and Prunella Scales venture into the open sea as they make their way through the islands of Scotland's coast. Their destination is the rarely used nine-mile Crinan canal on the Mull of Kintyre, described as the world's most beautiful shortcut. However, the Atlantic waves off the coast of Mull force them to head inland to Tobermory. They later explore the holy island of Iona and the Isle of Jura. (R)

9.00 Film: Dawn of the Planet of the Apes. (2014) Premiere. A colony of super-intelligent apes thrives following a global virus outbreak that wipes out much of the human race. A survivor tries to make peace with the leader of the apes, but their efforts to reach an understanding are threatened by warmongers on both sides. Sci-fi thriller sequel, starring Andy Serkis, Jason Clarke and Gary Oldman.

11.35 Film: Surrogates. (2009) Sci-fi thriller, with Bruce Willis and Radha Mitchell.

1.15 Ramsay's Kitchen Nightmares USA. (R) **2.05** Hollyoaks. **4.15** Kirstie's Fill Your House for Free. (R) **4.25** Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.05** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.40** Access. **10.45** Police Interceptors Unleashed. (R) **11.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **12.15** Police Interceptors. (R) **1.15** Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole. (R) **2.15** Benefits Britain: Life on the Dole. (R) **3.15** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **4.15** The Nightmare Neighbour Next Door. (R) **5.15** Nightmare Tenants, Slum Landlords. (R)

6.10 Can't Pay? We'll Take It Away. Paul Bohill and Steve Pinner face some tough decisions when they are given the task of repossessing a house in which a woman is living with two young children. (R)

7.05 NCIS: Los Angeles. The team hunts for an electromagnetic pulse device that was stolen from a college research facility, and could destroy Los Angeles if activated, killing millions of people.

8.00 NCIS. DiNozzo is reunited with his old flame, Jeanne Benoit, when insurgents in Sudan kidnap her doctor husband. Crime drama, guest starring Scottie Thompson.

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football on 5: The Championship. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce highlights from the weekend's Championship games, including Leeds United v Sheffield Wednesday in a huge Yorkshire derby at Elland Road. Plus, action from Aston Villa v Derby County at Villa Park, Barnsley v Huddersfield Town at Oakwell and Newcastle United v Bristol City at St James' Park.

10.00 Football on 5: Goal Rush. George Riley and Lynsey Hipgrave introduce all the goals from the weekend's games in Leagues One and Two, including AFC Wimbledon v Walsall and Bristol Rovers v Scunthorpe United.

10.30 Stealing the Mona Lisa. This episode looks back to 1911, when one of the most famous pieces of art across the globe, the Mona Lisa, was stolen from the Louvre museum in Paris.

11.30 Police Interceptors Unleashed. Officers take on a crook who has devised a crafty scheme to get something for nothing, while PC Barry Peach is confronted by a foul-mouthed pensioner. (R)

12.00 SuperCasino. **3.10** That's So 1985. (R) **4.00** Bargain-Loving Brits in the Sun. (R) **4.50** House Doctor. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Indian Hill Railways **8.00** Timeshift: The People's Liners – Britain's Lost Pleasure Fleets **9.00** Treasures of Ancient Egypt **10.00** Timewatch: Captain Cook – The Man Behind the Legend **11.00** Top of the Pops: 1983 **12.05** Arena: Loretta Lynn – Still a Mountain Girl **1.35** Country Kings at the BBC **2.35** Country Queens at the BBC **3.35** Sounds of the Seventies **3.50** Pop Go the Sixties **3.55** Close

ITV2
11.10 Ninja Warrior UK **12.10** Take Me Out **1.25** The Brit Awards 2017 **3.55 Film:** Step Up 3 (2010) **4.55** FYI Daily **5.00 Film:** Step Up 3 (2010) **6.05 Film:** Jack and Jill (2011) **7.05** FYI Daily **7.10 Film:** Jack and Jill (2011) **8.00** Scorpion **9.00 Film:** American Pie (1999) **10.10** FYI Daily **10.15 Film:** American Pie (1999) **11.00** Family Guy **12.25** American Dad! **12.55 Film:** Couples Retreat (2009) **1.55** FYI Daily **2.00 Film:** Couples Retreat (2009) **3.00** Teleshopping

ITV3
1.05 Film: Carry On Cleo (1964) **2.10** FYI Daily **2.15 Film:** Carry On Cleo (1964) **3.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **5.05** Midsomer Murders **11.00** Carry On Forever **12.00** Wycliffe **1.05** Marchlands **2.05** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4
11.00 Storage Wars: Texas **12.00** Pawn Stars **1.30** ITV Racing: Live from Kempton. Coverage of today's race meetings at Kempton Park, Lingfield Park and Newcastle. **4.00 Film:** The Cimarron Kid (1952) **5.00** FYI Daily **5.05 Film:** The Cimarron Kid (1952) **5.45** Storage Wars **6.45** Live Snooker Shoot-Out. **11.00 Film:** Red Heat (1988) **12.00** FYI Daily **12.05 Film:** Red Heat (1988) **1.05** River Monsters **2.00** Gunsmoke **2.55** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
1.15 Film: Alvin and the Chipmunks: The Squeakquel (2009) **3.00 Film:** St Trinian's 2: The Legend of Fritton's Gold (2009) **5.05** The Big Bang Theory **9.00 Film:** Paul (2011) **11.05** Gogglebox **12.10** Celebs Go Dating **2.20** Gap Year **3.15** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **4.00** Baby Daddy **4.45** Revenge

Film4
11.00 The Violent Men (1955) **12.55** Cutthroat Island (1995) **3.15** Carry On Cabby (1963) **5.00** Mr Popper's Penguins (2011) **6.45** The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader (2010) **9.00** Pitch Perfect (2012) **11.15** It Follows (2014) **1.20** The Sixth Sense (1999) **3.35** Close

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CHOICE

Sam Riley

SS-GB
(BBC1, 9pm)
Archer rushes to the rescue after learning of a resistance plan to kidnap his son. But he is trailed every step of the way by Huth and may be placing the boy in even greater danger. Harry feels betrayed when he finds out that Archer kept the tip-off from Sylvia a secret from him, and expresses his unease about trusting the inexperienced Jimmy with an important case. Archer finds himself morally torn as Huth demands his help in crushing the resistance, who have a plan to free the country from occupation at a terrible price.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **7.35** Match of the Day. (R) **9.00** The Andrew Marr Show. **10.00** The Big Questions. **11.00** Regional Programme. **12.15** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News; Weather. **1.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **2.15** Flog It! (R) **3.15** Escape to the Country. (R) **4.00** Songs of Praise. **4.35** Shop Well for Less? (R) **5.35** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.

6.00 The Big Painting Challenge. Mariella Frostrup and Richard Coles bring the contestants to Whipsnade Zoo to paint the animals, giving them a chance to demonstrate their ability to capture a sense of a living creature. The first challenge involves flamingos, which have a body shape that is harder to depict than it seems. The artists are then challenged to paint elephants, before the public panel vote for their favourite.

7.00 Countryfile. Matt Baker and Ellie Harrison present the show from the Isle of Man. Matt takes a ride on the world's only remaining horse-drawn tram, while Ellie explores the ruins of ancient homesteads from the island's agricultural past and bakes bread using traditional Manx methods. Adam Henson trains a new working dog for his farm and Tom Heap reports on the banning of second homes in Cornwall. Including weather for the week ahead.

8.00 Call the Midwife. Valerie treats a pregnant Somali woman who has undergone female genital circumcision, but who goes into hiding when the Nonnatus Team arrange for her to go into hospital.

9.00 SS-GB. Archer rushes to the rescue after learning of a resistance plan to kidnap his son. But he is trailed every step of the way by Huth and may be placing the boy in even greater danger.

10.00 BBC News.

10.20 Regional Programme.

10.30 Have I Got a Bit More Old News for You. Stephen Mangan hosts an extended edition of the quiz, with UKIP parliamentary spokesperson Suzanne Evans and comedian Henning Wehn joining Ian Hislop and Paul Merton. (R)

11.15 American High School.

12.00 The Celebrity Apprentice USA. **1.20** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.25** BBC News.

BBC2

6.15 Big Dreams Small Spaces. (R) **7.15** An Island Parish: Anguilla. (R) **7.45** Around the World in 80 Gardens. (R) **8.45** Countryfile. (R) **9.45** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **11.15** Nigel Slater's Dish of the Day. (R) **11.45** Nigellissima. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Holiday of My Lifetime with Len Goodman. (R) **1.30** Money for Nothing. (R) **2.15** Wanted Down Under Revisited. (R) **3.00** Birds of Paradise: The Ultimate Quest. (R) **4.00** Bobsleigh and Skeleton World Championships.

6.00 Six Nations Rugby Union. John Inverdale introduces action from the third weekend of the tournament, featuring Scotland v Wales at Murrayfield, England v Italy at Twickenham and Ireland v France at the Aviva Stadium.

7.00 Dragons' Den: Pitches to Riches. Richard Osman presents a look back at some of the most memorable contestants to appear on the business ideas show, and discovers what success they have enjoyed since making their pitch to the panel. Peter Jones pays a visit to celebrity chef Levi Roots, whose company Reggae Reggae Sauce became a success through his appearance on the show, while Deborah Meaden is reunited with Jordan Daykin, the youngest ever contestant to secure the backing of a Dragon, to discover if he has fulfilled his potential as an entrepreneur. (R)

8.00 Dragons' Den. The panel assess the profit-making potential of a Welsh delicacy, a male fragrance, and a food delivery service for Michelin star restaurants. With Evan Davis. Last in the series.

9.00 Special Forces – Ultimate Hell Week. The remaining recruits arrive in France to receive training with an elite tactical unit of the French police, where they face psychological and strategic challenges.

10.00 Film: Life of Crime. (2013) Premiere. Two criminals kidnap the wife of a corrupt real-estate tycoon, only to discover he is not willing to pay their ransom demand. Comedy, with Jennifer Aniston and Mos Def.

11.35 Women's Six Nations Highlights. Eilidh Barbour presents action from the third round of fixtures.

12.05 Film: Badlands. (1973) **1.35** Sign Zone: Question Time. (R) **2.35** Holby City. (R) **3.30** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: The Aquabats! Super Show! **6.25** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.45** Sooty. (R) **6.55** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.00** Oddbods. (R) **7.05** Thunderbirds Are Go. (R) **7.30** Scrambled! **7.35** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Ultimate Spider-Man: Web Warriors. **8.20** Horrid Henry. (R) **8.45** Teen Titans Go! (R) **9.05** Adventure Time. (R) **9.25** Countrywise: Guide to Britain. (R) **10.00** Peston on Sunday. **10.55** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **11.55** ITV News; Weather. **12.00** The Voice UK. (R) **2.00** Live Six Nations Rugby Union. England v Italy (Kick-off 3.00pm). **5.30** Regional Programme ; Weather.**5.45** ITV News; Weather.

6.00 Unbelievable Moments Caught on Camera. Alastair Stewart presents a second selection of extraordinary footage, including wakeboarders enjoying a memorable encounter with dolphins off the coast of Mexico, a stuntman who became the first person to land a wingsuit without a parachute, and a motorcyclist who was rescued after getting trapped beneath a burning car. Plus, footage of a tornado and a wedding at 30,000 feet.

7.00 The Voice UK. The second night of the Battles phase, in which the singers have to impress coaches Tom Jones, will.i.am, Gavin Rossdale and Jennifer Hudson to remain in the contest. Each of the coaches are given the chance to save any acts they believe shouldn't have been knocked out of the contest in the forthcoming head-to-head sing-offs.

9.00 The Good Karma Hospital. A medical case becomes personal for Ram as he prepares to attend a wedding, while Ruby treats a patient from the UK whose story does not add up.

10.00 ITV News; Weather.

10.20 Peston on Sunday. Political magazine, presented by Robert Peston, with ITV News National Editor Allegra Stratton. (R)

11.20 Phillip Schofield's South African Adventure. In the first of three programmes, Phillip Schofield and wife Steph visit South Africa, where the pair admire Cape Town and Phillip gets to see a great white shark. (R)

11.50 The Cube. (R)

12.45 Jackpot247. **3.00** Chopping Block. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.15 The King of Queens. (R) **6.40** The King of Queens. (R) **7.05** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **7.55** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **8.25** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **1.00** The Simpsons. (R) **1.30** The Simpsons. (R) **2.00** George Clarke's Amazing Spaces. (R) **3.00** Location, Location, Location. (R) **4.00** Channel 4 News. **4.30 Film:** 101 Dalmatians. (1996) Disney comedy adventure remake, starring Glenn Close.

6.30 The Jump. The remaining contestants compete in two different disciplines. First, they face a speed ski challenge, the results of which will determine the line-up for the second event – the relatively new winter sport of ski cross, in which they will navigate a winding course of sprints, drops, rollers and banks. Presented by Davina McCall.

8.00 Rivers with Jeremy Paxman. New series. The presenter and fishing enthusiast travels along four of England's greatest rivers, exploring their history, traditions and wildlife. The first episode follows the Tweed along the English-Scottish border, where he helps to shear Cheviot sheep, tags osprey chicks, goes in search of Merlin's grave and discovers the origins of famous border ballads.

9.00 Homeland. Keane ends up left on the sidelines, while Carrie finds her work is starting to impact on her home life.

10.00 Gogglebox. The amateur critics share their opinions on what they have been watching during the week as the popular series returns for its ninth run. (R)

11.00 Film: Clear and Present Danger. (1994) A CIA analyst is caught up in the Colombian drug trade as he hunts the terrorists who killed a friend of the US president. Action thriller, with Harrison Ford and Willem Dafoe.

1.30 The Last Leg. A comic review of the past seven days. (R) **2.30** Hoarder SOS. Experts persuade a Cambridgeshire woman to part with piles of perfume bottles. (R) **3.25** Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. Homeowners stuck in properties they cannot sell. (R) **4.20** Kirstie's Handmade Treasures. (R) **4.40** Four in a Bed. The week's winner is announced. (R) **5.10** Fifteen to One. General knowledge quiz, hosted by Sandi Toksvig. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Peppa Pig. (R) **6.10** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **6.15** Milkshake! Bop Box. (R) **6.20** Paw Patrol. (R) **6.30** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.45** Fireman Sam. (R) **6.55** Rupert Bear. (R) **7.05** Olly the Little White Van. (R) **7.10** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **7.20** Angelina Ballerina. (R) **7.40** Little Princess. (R) **7.55** Paw Patrol. (R) **8.10** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.35** Noddy: Toyland Detective. (R) **8.55** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **9.10** Shimmer and Shine. (R) **9.35** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.45** Peppa Pig. (R) **9.55** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **10.05** Seaside Antics. (R) **10.10** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.45** Football on 5: The Championship. (R) **11.40** Football on 5: Goal Rush. (R) **12.10** Inside Windsor Castle. (R) **1.10** Secrets of the National Trust with Alan Titchmarsh. (R) **2.10 Film:** No Reservations. (2007) Romantic comedy, with Catherine Zeta-Jones and Aaron Eckhart. **4.10 Film:** Bride Wars. (2009) Comedy, starring Kate Hudson and Anne Hathaway. **5.55** 5 News Weekend.

6.00 Film: The Fifth Element. (1997) In the 23rd century, the world faces destruction from a seemingly unstoppable force of pure evil. Meanwhile, a New York cab driver encounters a mysterious woman destined to save the Earth from its fate, and has to protect her from a scheming arms dealer and a horde of alien mercenaries. Luc Besson's sci-fi adventure, starring Bruce Willis, Milla Jovovich and Gary Oldman. Edited for language and nudity.

8.15 The EFL Cup Final Highlights: Football on 5. Manchester United v Southampton. Action from the showpiece match, as Jose Mourinho's Red Devils met Claude Puel's Saints at Wembley Stadium.

9.00 Film: Olympus Has Fallen. (2013) A disgraced secret service agent tries to redeem himself when terrorists take control of the White House. Action thriller, starring Gerard Butler, Aaron Eckhart and Morgan Freeman. Includes 5 News Update at 10pm.

11.15 Film: The Terminator. (1984) A cyborg from the future is sent back in time to kill a woman whose unborn son is destined to save the human race. Sci-fi thriller, with Arnold Schwarzenegger.

1.15 SuperCasino. **3.10** Secrets of the National Trust with Alan Titchmarsh. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Four
7.00 Sound of Song **8.00** South Downs: England's Mountains Green **9.00 Film:** Two Days, One Night (2014) **10.30 Film:** Hockney (2014) **12.15** Treasures of the Louvre **1.45** Order and Disorder with Jim Al-Khalili **2.45** South Downs: England's Mountains Green **3.45** Close

ITV2
1.00 2Awesome: 2Awesome **1.10** 2Awesome: Guidance **1.45** 2Awesome: Fame High **2.05** 2Awesome: Third Wheel **2.35** 2Awesome: LA Story **2.50** The Hot Desk: Jonas Blue **3.05 Film:** The Smurfs 2 (2013) **4.05** FYI Daily **4.10 Film:** The Smurfs 2 (2013) **5.10** Ant & Dec's Saturday Night Takeaway **6.45 Film:** Kindergarten Cop (1990) **7.45** FYI Daily **7.50 Film:** Kindergarten Cop (1990) **9.00** Ibiza Weekender **10.00** Family Guy **11.30** American Dad! **12.30** The Cleveland Show **1.25** Ibiza Weekender **2.15** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3
3.10 Film: Carry On Girls (1973) **4.10** FYI Daily **4.15 Film:** Carry On Girls (1973) **5.00** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Midsomer Murders **9.00** Tonight at the London Palladium **10.00** Carry On Forever **11.05 Film:** Carry On Cleo (1964) **12.10** FYI Daily **12.15 Film:** Carry On Cleo (1964) **1.00** Inspector Morse **2.55** May the Best House Win **4.35** On the Buses **5.20** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
11.45 Live Snooker Shoot-Out. **4.00** Pawn Stars **4.30** The Car Chasers **5.25** World Cup Top Goalscorers **5.45** Live Snooker Shoot-Out. **10.00 Film:** Total Recall (2012) **11.00** FYI Daily **11.05 Film:** Total Recall (2012) **12.15 Film:** From Dusk Till Dawn (1996) **1.15** FYI Daily **1.20 Film:** From Dusk Till Dawn (1996) **2.15** Hogan's Heroes **2.45** ITV4 Nightscreen **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
12.05 Coach Trip: Road to Marbs: Final Week **1.15** The Jump **2.55** The Goldbergs **4.25** The Big Bang Theory **6.55 Film:** Men in Black 3 (2012) **9.00** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **10.00 Film:** Red (2010) **12.15** Celebs Go Dating **3.10** Marvel's Agents of SHIELD **3.55** Hollyoaks

Film4
11.00 The Colditz Story (1954) **1.00** Percy Jackson & the Lightning Thief (2010) **3.15** Spy Kids 4: All the Time in the World (2011) **4.55** 12 Angry Men (1957) **6.50** The Three Musketeers (2011) **9.00** GI Joe: Retaliation (2013) **11.10** Killing Them Softly (2012) **1.00** The Running Man (1987) **3.05** Close

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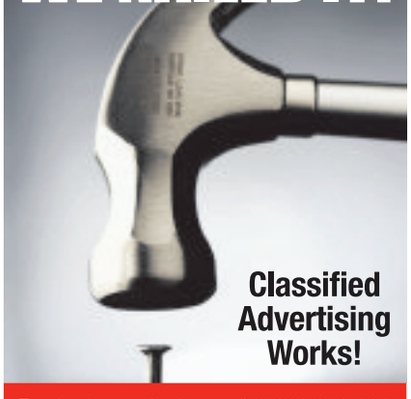

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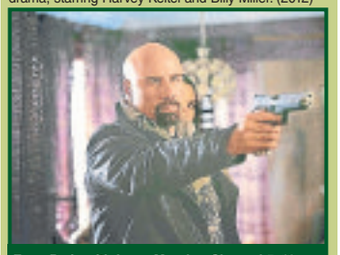
PICK OF THE WEEK

FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
From Paris with Love, Channel 5, 10pm
An aide at the American embassy in Paris longs to become a CIA agent, but gets more than he bargained for when he is assigned to assist an trigger-happy secret service operative. The agent leads him on a dangerous journey through the city's underworld as they fight to prevent a terrorist attack on the city. Action thriller, with John Travolta. (2010)

TUESDAY
Dear Diary, I Died, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Premiere. When a college student appears to have committed suicide, her sister tries to uncover the secrets behind her death. Thriller, starring Katherine Kelly Lang. (2016)

WEDNESDAY
Fatal Honeymoon, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A woman goes on honeymoon to Australia, only to drown during a scuba-diving trip to the Great Barrier Reef. Her father is not convinced this was an accident, and begins to suspect her husband may have murdered her. A year later, he finally finds the evidence to prove his accusation. Fact-based crime drama, starring Harvey Keitel and Billy Miller. (2012)


From Paris with Love, Monday, Channel 5, 10pm

THURSDAY
A Date to Die For, Channel 5, 3.15pm
A recent divorcee, suffering from bipolar disorder, accepts a date with a single father. The next morning, she awakens to find her date's dead body in her bed, a knife plunged in his chest. Trying to piece together her memories of the previous night, she sets out to defend her reputation and the lives of her family by locating the killer herself. Thriller, starring Victoria Pratt. (2015)

FRIDAY
Zero Dark Thirty, Channel 4, 12.55am
A CIA operative joins a team of intelligence and military operatives in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. She spends the next 10 years searching for information on the whereabouts of Osama bin Laden, ultimately leading to the final raid on the terrorist leader's hideout. Kathryn Bigelow's fact-based drama, starring Jessica Chastain. (2012)

Duo find they have one final case to solve

It's the beginning of the end…

Once this, the third series of Broadchurch, reaches its conclusion, there will be no more.

The show's writer and creator, Chris Chibnall, is off to pastures new, to take over as showrunner of Doctor Who, while the stars are… well, who knows? But one thing is for sure - all of them are bound to be in demand.

"When Chris Chibnall first sent me the script for the opening episode of Broadchurch six years ago, I was struck by one defining element," claims executive producer Jane Featherstone. "I loved the characters, I loved the beauty of the world, I loved the powerful whodunit narrative, but above all I loved the way it explored a small-town community in such depth.

"Chris' intention was always to inhabit a space which meant we could stay with our characters and our town after the crime has happened, to really examine the long-term effects of a tragic incident on a community. Our characters had lives before we joined them and they will continue to exist after we have gone."

The final run begins three years on from the events of the previous series, and five years from when we first met the residents.

"There is a bold new crime story which forces us to ask whether the town has a crack running through it caused by Danny Latimer's death; is this new crime somehow the long-term legacy of that dark moment?" says Featherstone. "Our central characters must contend with this possibility as they battle to make hope, friendship and love triumph over fear and suspicion, as a host of new suspects present themselves.

"The great privilege of long-form storytelling is building a meaningful relationship between our characters and the audience and I am excited for the audience to see how Ellie, Hardy and the Latimers have fared in the last few years. It is a fond farewell for those of us involved in the series for so many years, but as far as I am concerned, the community of Broadchurch will carry on living long after we've gone."

Olivia Colman, David Tennant, Jodie Whittaker and Andy Buchan are all back again, bolstered by Julie Hesmondhalgh, Sarah Parish, Lenny Henry, Mark Bazeley, Georgina Campbell, Charlie Higson and Roy Hudd.

In the opening episode, Ellie (Colman) and Hardy (Tennant) are called out to attend to Trish Winterman (Hesmondhalgh), who has reported a serious sexual assault. It's clear she has been raped, but cannot tell the police where the attack happened, or who carried it out.

A clue found at Trish's home eventually leads them to the crime scene, but it's a difficult and unusual setting – and one that proves difficult for the forensics team to work in. But, perhaps more disturbing than anything else, is the fact that evidence suggests it was not an opportunistic act, but rather a cold, calculated and planned one.

Hardy considers the theory that once again, a serious sexual predator is at large in the otherwise sleepy coastal town – and may strike again at any moment.

Olivia Colman and David Tennant star in Broadchurch, Monday, ITV, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
The 2,000,000 Calorie Buffet
Channel 4, 10pm
For some of us, just seeing that title makes us salivate. The idea of being able to tuck into a banquet of lovely nosh without having to hold back or stop, even if our insides are at bursting point, is something we dream of. It's almost a challenge too – to find out who can consume the most at one sitting. The concept of an all-you-can-eat buffet is thought to have originated in Las Vegas, but they are now a growing phenomenon on this side of the Atlantic too, but who benefits from such an approach – the customers or the restaurants desperate to pull in the punters? We're about to find out courtesy of this documentary, which takes viewers into the heart of three eateries whose managers are wondering if adopting the service was really a good idea.

TUESDAY
The Replacement
BBC1, 9pm
Morven Christie stars in a new three-part thriller about a woman who fears she is losing her identity – but is that because she's about to become a mother, or is someone genuinely out to steal her life? Architect Ellen (Christie) discovers she's pregnant shortly after winning a big contract for her firm. She hires Paula (Vicky McClure) as maternity cover, but becomes uneasy when the new recruit dismisses Ellen's plans to return to work in a couple of months, insisting that she will want to spend more time with her baby. As Paula ingratiates herself with Ellen's bosses, clients and even her friends, the mum-to-be starts to fear that her new employee plans to become her permanent replacement. Everyone else puts Ellen's concerns down to a mix of paranoia and pregnancy, but then a terrible accident strikes the firm.

WEDNESDAY
Little Big Shots
ITV, 8pm
Dawn French presents this new series which gives a platform to some of the world's most talented children, without forcing them to be subjected to any judges or a telephone vote. Instead, they get to have a nice, friendly chat with Dawn before showing off their incredible skills, which can range from cooking to a flair for spelling. In the first episode, we meet ballroom and Latin dancing sensations Joshua and Kerry, 9, from Ireland, as well as gifted pianist Leo, 8, from Manchester. We're also introduced to three remarkable seven-year-olds; Balang, from the Philippines, who shows us how he became an internet dance sensation, football fanatic Braydon from Warrington, and London-based kung-Fu warrior Junayde. There's also music courtesy of 10-year-old Norwegian jazz sensation Angelina.

The Replacement, Tuesday, BBC1, 9pm

THURSDAY
Prime Suspect 1973
ITV, 9pm
It was first announced back in 2015 and has taken almost two years to reach us, but will this prequel to Lynda La Plante's much-loved crime drama series be worth the wait? Early signs are good; the period detail is intact and the cast look impressive. The original programme turned Helen Mirren into a household name thanks to her portrayal of hard-bitten detective Jane Tennison; Doctor Thorne star Stefanie Martini will have big shoes to fill when she takes over the role, playing Tennison as a 22-year-old WPC straight out of training and onto the streets of Hackney. She suffers sexism everywhere she turns, but looks set to make her mark when she is assigned to her first murder case, which involves the death of a teenage girl. Sam Reid and Blake Harrison also appear.

FRIDAY
Live Athletics: European Indoor Championships
BBC2, 3pm
Gabby Logan presents coverage of the second session on day one from the Kombank Arena in Belgrade, Serbia, where medals are awarded in five events. Katarina Johnson-Thompson concludes her bid to retain the pentathlon title when she competes in the long jump and 800m, while the other finals taking place are in the men's pole vault and 60m hurdles, and the women's shot put and 60m hurdles. With commentary and analysis from Steve Backley, Steve Cram, Colin Jackson, Denise Lewis and Paula Radcliffe.

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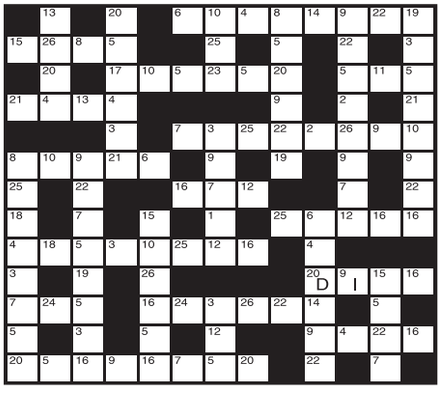
Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



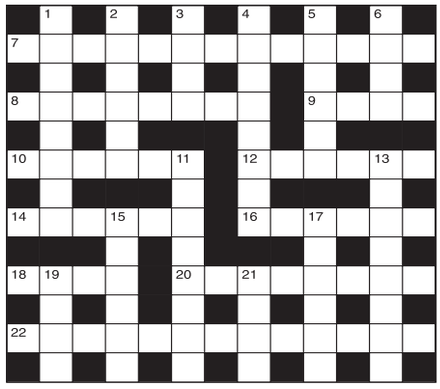
1	14
2	15
3	16
4	17
5	18
6	19
7	20 D
8	21
9 I	22
10	23
11	24
12	25
13	26

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Q	L	N	Z	K	E	B	I	A	O	F	C	H
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
S	G	R	M	X	V	P	U	W	J	Y	T	D

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.



Cryptic Clues:

Across

7. A fitting description, as a rule (4,2,7)
8. Placed in a grave position (8)
9. A particular variation of time (4)
10. It's hot to the tongue, and cold to the ear (6)
12. After all, it is very new (6)
14. Added zest in the kitchen (6)
16. His map is spoiled by accident (6)
18. The odd dose of poetry? (4)
20. He won't expect to be taken seriously when working (8)
22. Are friends and succeed in a joint enterprise (3,2,8)

Down

1. It must honour its pledges (4,4)
2. Make something known about calf meat (6)
3. Number who sound as though they approve (4)
4. Part of a movement set to swing time (8)
5. A fool it's wrong to help (6)
6. Let out for no rent (4)
11. Show I can edit afresh (8)
13. One who makes predictions about a distant traveller (8)
15. It's regular trade practice (6)
17. Teased about being placid (6)
19. Special fare for a conference (4)
21. They gave original Christmas gifts, showing some imagination (4)

Quick Clues:

Across

7. Moody (13)
8. Gloomy (8)
9. Part (4)
10. Cask (6)
12. Split (6)
14. Decrease (6)
16. Piping (6)
18. Couple (4)
20. Easily frightened (8)
22. Additional (13)

Down

1. Adjust (8)
2. Seem (6)
3. Press (4)
4. Tacit (8)
5. False (6)
6. Lament (4)
11. Extend (8)
13. Front line (8)
15. Streak (6)
17. Scold (6)
19. Adjoin (4)
21. Submissive (4)

Sudoku

2	5							4
		9	5		2	3		
	1		4	6			2	
	3		9				7	
7				3				6
	2			5	7		8	
	7			8	5		4	
9		5	2		1	8		
							6	2

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3x3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTIONS >

5	9	8	3	2	1	4	7	6
2	1	3	7	6	4	9	5	8
4	7	6	9	5	8	3	1	2
6	4	2	5	1	3	7	8	9
8	5	7	4	9	6	2	3	1
9	3	1	2	8	7	6	4	5
1	6	4	8	3	9	5	2	7
3	2	9	1	7	5	8	6	4
7	8	5	6	4	2	1	9	3

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Idea; 8 Drummed out; 9 Abstract; 10 Earn; 12 Nearly; 14 Yields; 15 Parkas; 17 Litter; 18 Lean; 19 Rosemary; 21 Fall asleep; 22 Sage. Down: 2 Double datet; 3 Adit; 4 Queasy; 5 Smithy; 6 Adherent; 7 Eton; 11 Red herring; 13 Rekindle; 16 Stress; 17 Listen; 18 Left; 20 Maps.
QUICK - Across: 1 High; 8 Ameliorate; 9 Material; 10 Copy; 12 Fickle; 14 Report; 15 Abject; 17 Rather; 18 Mean; 19 Intimate; 21 Persuasive; 22 Tend. Down: 2 Invariable; 3 Hale; 4 Device; 5 Killer; 6 Crackpot; 7 Deny; 11 Perfection; 13 Keenness; 16 Tribal; 17 Retain; 18 Mope; 20 Meet.

Quiz

1. Which people's word for a European means 'the big eyebrows'?
2. Who starred as Hannibal Lecter in Silence of the Lambs?
3. Which two countries originally contested the Ryder Cup?
4. Of which beetle is the wireworm the larva?
5. What is a mountain lion or cougar more correctly called?
6. Who regained the world heavyweight boxing championship after more than 20 years in 1994?
7. In which country was the first Women's Institute group founded in 1897?
8. Who is the only US president to have been elected for four consecutive terms?
9. Of which country have there been three king Victor Emmanuels?
10. Who succeeded Bobby Fischer as world chess champion in 1975?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 African wildcat; 2 Yashmak; 3 Sister Act; 4 Rio de Janeiro; 5 Michael Heseltine; 6 Terracotta; 7 Marsupial; 8 Finland; 9 Robert Powell; 10 Pear tree.

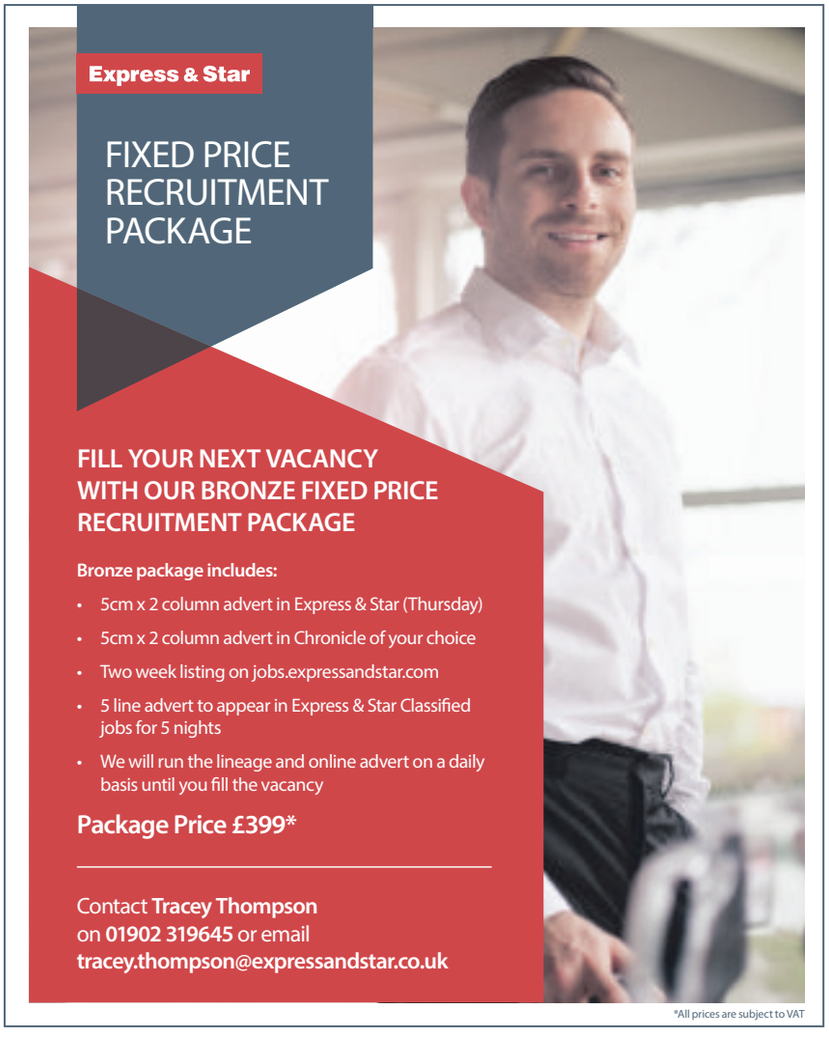
Niner: PURCHASED

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

1679749 gives flowers,
878749 gives more flowers,
3728459 gives even more flowers.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9



Dudley Chronicle Thursday, February 23, 2017

It's easy to get around Hamburg via the city's over and underground train lines

Speicherstadt district with the new Elbphilharmonie

The Reeperbahn Festival takes its name from the popular Reeperbahn Street

Beer o'clock at the famous Ratsheern brewery

City of culture, canals and Currywurst

Hamburg, Germany

IT was like stepping into a movie set. Tall, red brick-buildings lined the old canals. The district, once a thriving hub of activity, was now eerily quiet except for the faint echoes that bounced off the walls.

We were walking through the Speicherstadt, or the 'Old Warehouse City', a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

A castle-like restaurant awaited us several hundred yards away where we were to have lunch. It was sat on one of the bridges crossing the canal.

I had a Currywurst – a steamed (then fried) sausage topped off with a spicy ketchup and curry powder. It was an interesting combination.

The Restaurant, called Wasserschloss, proved a great setting to take in the surroundings. We were perched up on tables on an outside deck. I could make out cranes spaced out along the copper roof tops – which were used for winching up cargo into the warehouses for storage.

"The storage companies moved out about 25 years ago," my tour guide Paul Klein said. "And modern companies moved in for office space." It was one of Hamburg's many distinctive districts. The Speicherstadt was built in the late 19th and early 20th century, with its buildings and architecture unique to Hamburg.

Around the corner was a newly-opened coffee museum, which housed all information and equipment about coffee. Coffee is important in Hamburg's history. Coffee was one of the main commodities stored in the warehouses, alongside others such as tea and carpet, which is why the museum had opened up in the Speicherstadt.

Wunderland

Also close by was 'Miniatur Wunderland' – the largest model railway in the world. Exhibitions spanning multiple floors displayed tiny replicas of cities across the world – including Las Vegas and, of course, Hamburg.

And the settings of the exhibitions would change from day to night every few minutes, which gave an added authentic touch.

Hamburg has many tales, spread out across districts of different time periods. Each one with a unique appearance and vibe.

The city was bombed heavily during the Second World War, so a lot of re-development has taken place. This includes the overdue 800 million Euro symphony hall due to open this year, called the Elbphilharmonie.

A few blocks away from the Speicherstadt was St Pauli – a district in total contrast to the sleepy warehouse area. It is well known for its entertainment and night-life. Parts of it were not family friendly.

It was the old stomping ground of The Beatles in the 1960s, which is still celebrated today. It is also home to one of Europe's largest legal red light districts.

We were taken through the colourful streets by musician Stefanie Hempel. She showed us the venues that The Beatles once played, whilst performing their hit-songs. "The Beatles got their trademark haircut whilst in Hamburg." she said, adopting the style of German art students.

The waterways of Hamburg are important part of life in the city. The canals run to the River Elbe, and restaurants will often serve up fish on their menus, including fresh water shrimps.

The Ratsheern Brewery, located in St Pauli, offered great beer, which could be sampled on tours of the brewery. The overground and underground train lines made navigating the city easy.

I stayed at the Hotel Reichshof during my trip, located right across the road from Hamburg's central train station, Hauptbahnhof. It was a traditional hotel across six storeys with a restaurant, bar, and sports and spa facilities.

After five days experiencing the city, I found Hamburg a warm city with real character, culture and authenticity.

Each district offered something different – shopping, history, art, museums and entertainment.

Hamburg would make an enjoyable getaway trip for a city break, whatever time of year, where you can find a genuine look into modern Germany.

Jamie Brassington

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Selected dates Apr to Jun, Sep & Oct 2017

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PROPERTY

YOUR WEEKLY GUIDE TO HOME BUYING AND LETTING

Ideal first-time buy is beautifully presented home

A beautifully presented semi-detached family home, 10 Roundhouse Road, Upper Gornal, Dudley, is for sale through Trinity Property at £124,950 with no chain.

Having off-road parking nearby, which is not allocated, it lies in a popular location with local schools nearby, with Roberts primary within a five-minute walk.

The accommodation is well decorated throughout in neutral shades. Having double glazing and central heating, the accommodation briefly comprises of a good-sized through lounge/dining room, a fitted kitchen with a door to the side alley.

Upstairs the home has two good-sized bedrooms – which are both double – and a house bathroom/WC with shower over the bath.

This home also has a garden to the front and private rear garden with patio.

Trinity Property bring a fresh, friendly and honest approach to selling, buying and letting property within the Dudley and Stourbridge area.

Offering free market appraisals, great EPC prices, all aspects of property letting and management; they are based in central Dudley and cover Kingswinford, Wordsley, Netherton, Sedgley, Tipton and Tividale and more, with a business built on recommendation.

"With many years of experience to bring to the table, you can expect great service at the right price," said a spokesman for the selling agent.

"We can offer you internet marketing on Rightmove, OnTheMarket, TrinityProperty.net and others, as well as local and regional marketing in newspapers including the Express and Star, Chronicles and local newspapers, along with our eye-catching Cerise and Black (Sales) and Yellow and Green (Lettings) boards on the streets."

Trinity Property's Lettings Department can offer full property management, rent collection and tenant-find services, with rent guarantees and the Unique Rent On Time available.

So, for your one-stop property shop, Trinity Property can open all the right doors.

UPPER GORNAL £124,950

TO VIEW THIS PROPERTY

AGENT: Trinity Property
TEL: 01384 213395
EMAIL: dudley@trinityproperty.net

KEY FEATURES

Beautifully presented semi
2 good sized bedrooms
Through lounge/diner
Bathroom/WC
No chain

They're sold

Turn to your local estate agent to sell your property and you will be **SOLD ON:**

- Professional accredited local agent service
- Free valuation
- Local area knowledge
- Adverts in local newspapers, online and office window display
- Registered house hunters
- Solid marketing advice to help you sell fast

If you are thinking of selling, look no further than the estate agents in these pages for the best local advice available.

A modern and spacious three-storey town house

TIPTON,
£179,950

A lovely, modern three-storey town house, 100 Horseley Heath, Tipton, has spacious family accommodation.

It is for sale through Paul Dubberley at £179,950.

With gas central heating and double glazing and beautifully presented throughout, its accommodation briefly comprises a reception hall, a lounge/dining room, a fitted breakfast kitchen, utility room, four bedrooms, master with fitted wardrobes and an en-suite and bedroom two with a Jack and Jill en-suite and bedroom four/guest room – bedrooms two and three also with wardrobes – a bathroom, garage, additional parking and a garden with a pathway leading to the garage.

For further information, or to book that all important viewing, call them on 0121 522 3733.

Home in need of updating has great scope for improvement

BEARWOOD
£225,000 <<<

In need of updating and modernisation, this four-bedroomed semi-detached house in West Park Road, Bearwood, Smethwick has good sized accommodation.

With majority double glazing and central heating, it is for sale through Tom Giles at £225,000. Situated opposite West Smethwick Park, it has a porch, reception hall, front sitting room, rear sitting room, middle sitting room, kitchen, four bedrooms, a bathroom, a separate toilet, a side garage with a downstairs toilet, a block paved driveway and a large lawned garden at rear.

Public transport services are close by providing links into Oldbury, Bearwood, Birmingham, West Bromwich and other surrounding areas. Galton Bridge Railway Station is situated half a mile away offering.

For further information contact Tom Giles on 0121 5526171.

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KINGSWINFORD, Clear View

A SUBSTANTIAL & SUPERIOR DETACHED FAMILY HOME which is superbly positioned, within this prestige cul de sac, just off Lodge Lane, enjoying an open front out look and a very private rear aspect . The enviable position includes a LARGE BLOCK PAVED DRIVEWAY, GENEROUS GARAGE and EXTENSIVE REAR/ SIDE GARDENS. The property is BEAUTIFULLY PRESENTED throughout and includes FOUR LARGE BEDROOMS with En Suite. EPC D

£525,000

SEDGLEY, Sandyfields Road

EXTENDED, gas centrally heated, double glazed THREE DOUBLE BEDROOM detached with PANORAMIC DISTANT VIEWS comprising, hall, store, extended L shape through living/dining room, kitchen, utility room, cloakroom. THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom. garage, gardens. EPC C SEDGLEY. ALL OFFERS TO BE RECEIVED FOR THE VENDORS CONSIDERATION BY MIDDAY MONDAY 27TH FEBRUARY 2017.

Offers in the region of £300,000

DUDLEY, Breamore Crescent, Earls Keep

A gas centrally heated, UPVC double glazed detached residence in exemplary order upon favoured Earls Keep development. Accommodation includes hall, cloak room, store, lounge, separate dining room, upgraded kitchen with granite work surfaces and many integrated appliances, utility room. Four generous bedrooms, en suite, bathroom, garage, delightful rear garden. EPC Rating D SEDGLEY

New price WAS £285,000, NOW £279,950

KINGSWINFORD, Summercourt Drive

Ideally placed within one of Kingswinford's most sought after addresses, with a LONG DRIVEWAY approach, this EXTENDED DETACHED BUNGALOW requires updating/improvement, providing much potential to enhance the GENEROUS accommodation which includes TWO DOUBLE BEDROOMS, the master with en-suite shower room. To the rear is a GOOD SIZE & PRIVATE GARDEN. EPC D

No upward chain £319,950

COSELEY, Hall Lane, Hurst Hill

AMAZINGLY presented detached family home and offering accommodation over 3 storeys with central heating& double glazing this FAMILY HOME comprises; porch, hall, lounge, dining room, kitchen, utility room, guest W/C, FIVE BEDROOMS, en-suite to MASTER SUITE, JACK & JILL BATHROOM adjoining bedrooms 2 and 3, BATHROOM, garden, driveway. GARAGE to rear. VIEWING RECOMMENDED EPC:C SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £284,950

WOMBOURNE, Banbery Drive

SIGNIFICANTLY EXTENDED, gas centrally heated & double glazed detached that has been transformed by present vendors & comprising; hall, cloaks cupboard, extended 27ft living/dining room, extended & recently REFITTED 18ft breakfast kitchen with a fine range of 'high gloss cream' units. Three bedrooms, study, bathroom, Shortened garage, utility room, garden. EPC C SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £228,750

DUDLEY, Mansion Close, Earls Keep

Superbly presented DETACHED situated on the Earls Keep development & benefitting from gas central heating & double glazing this family home also boasts; living room, dining area, kitchen-diner, conservatory, utility room, guest W/C, THREE BEDROOMS with en-suite to master bedroom, bathroom, landscaped rear garden, garage & driveway. VIEWING HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. EPC:TBA SEDGLEY

New price WAS £224,950, NOW £219,950

LOWER GORNAL, Longfellow Road, Straits

NO UPWARD CHAIN, Extremely well maintained semi-detached property in the very desirable area of 'THE STRAITS' Lower Gornal. As well as having an EXTENSION to rear which incorporates a wet room, sitting room, utility, guest W/C and utility room, this home also boasts; porch, hall, living room, extended dining room, extended kitchen, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom, garage, enclosed rear garden with driveway and garden to front. EPC: TBA SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £219,950

LOWER GORNAL, The Alley

EXCELLENTLY SITUATED within walking distance of the village in quiet 'backwater' this tremendously upgraded gas centrally & double glazed detached family home comprises; entrance porch, hall, lounge, separate dining room, conservatory, refitted kitchen, pantry, three generous bedrooms (two with fitted units), bathroom with 'heritage' suite, carport, garage, secluded/ sheltered garden to side and rear. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £210,000

LOWER GORNAL, Oakland Drive

Well maintained SEMI DETACHED located in the desirable area of LOWER GORNAL & benefiting from gas central heating & double glazing, this EXTENDED property also boasts hall, living room, dining area, conservatory, breakfast-kitchen, integral garage, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom, delightfully tended enclosed rear garden, good-sized driveway and garden to front. VIEWING HIGHLY RECOMMENDED. EPC C SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £190,000

HIMLEY, Churns Hill Lane

For those of 55 years and over, this SUPERB ATTRACTIVELY APPOINTED TWO BEDROOM MEWS BUNGALOW is pleasantly located and offers a spacious layout which is READY TO MOVE INTO and enhanced by a CONSERVATORY, plus OFF-ROAD PARKING and a beautifully landscaped garden. EPC C

£180,000

SEDGLEY, Queens Road

EXTENDED, modernised, conscientiously maintained, gas centrally heated (combi boiler) & double glazed semi detached within walking distance of open fields, schools, shops etc. comprising; porch, hall, sitting room, dining room, and garden room beyond, understairs cloaks, extended recently refitted breakfast kitchen, outer porch. Narrow 'garage'. Three bedrooms, bathroom.garden, block paved drive. EPC:D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £178,750

SEDGLEY, Gate Street

Situated within walking distance of Sedgley centre and other local amenities, this much-improved family home has so much to offer. Benefiting from gas central heating and double glazing, this superbly presented semi-detached also boasts; porch, hall, living room, kitchen-diner, utility, guest W/C, conservatory, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom, garage, driveway to front and enclosed rear garden. VIEWING HIGHLY RECOMMENDED EPC D SEDGLEY.

Offers in the region of £169,950

SEDGLEY, The Ridgeway

An appreciably spacious, gas centrally heated semi detached for improvement in favoured neighbourhood with GOOD DISTANT VIEWS that has been conscientiously maintained over the years but now requires updating comprising; entrance porch, hallway, separate dining room, through living room, rear lobby, pantry, kitchen, utility/store, outer porch, outbuilding, Three generous bedrooms, bathroom. Garden.EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £165,000

UPPER GORNAL, The Paddock

Gas centrally heated UPVC double glazed traditional style semi set at head of cul-de-sac (just off Clarence Street) this much improved home comprises entrance porch, reception hall, walk in cloaks, under stair store, 23'9" through living/dining room, refitted kitchen, upgraded utility room; three bedrooms (two with fitted wardrobes), tiled upgraded bathroom, large garage, recently block paved foregarden, sheltered rear garden. EPC C SEDGLEY

New price WAS £159,950, NOW £154,950

WOODSETTON, Rosalind Avenue

EXTENDED, conscientiously maintained, Freehold, gas centrally heated & either UPVC or aluminium framed double glazed semi detached comprising; porch, hall, 23'3" through living/dining room, EXTENDED kitchen with an extensive range of units, pantry, lobby. Three bedrooms, shower room, toilet. Lengthy garage. Driveway and extensive rear patio together with neat garden. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £139,950

DUDLEY, Beaumaris Close

NO UPWARD CHAIN. Situated in the Dudley area, this modern end of terrace is an ideal first time buyer home. Boasting gas central heating and double glazing, this starter property also has good-sized living room, kitchen-diner, TWO BEDROOMS, bathroom, enclosed rear garden and parking space for two cars. EPC: D SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £129,950

COSELEY, Rounds Hill Road

NO UPWARD CHAIN, Conveniently located, this ideal starter home has been well maintained with both central heating and double glazing. This semi-detached property also benefits from entrance hallway, through lounge-diner, fitted kitchen, THREE BEDROOMS, bathroom, enclosed rear garden, garden and drive to front. EPC: TBC. SEDGLEY

Offers in the region of £124,950

Substantial and superior detached family home

KINGSWINFORD

£525,000 >>>

This substantial and superior detached family home in Clear View, Kingswinford, lies in a cul-de-sac in a highly sought-after area.

Well placed for Summerhill Secondary School, it is for sale through Taylors at £525,000.

The accommodation includes gas central heating/ upvc double glazing and briefly comprises a reception hall with a guest cloakroom/ WC off, a huge full-depth sitting room, a separate dining room/second sitting room, conservatory, refitted full-depth family breakfast kitchen with appliances, a laundry room, spacious landing, four large bedrooms, a refitted en-suite shower room and a refitted house bathroom.

Contact Taylors on 01384 401777 or visit www.taylors-estateagents.co.uk

Large bungalow is on a corner plot

HALESOWEN

£325,000

The Drive in Halesowen, is a generously proportioned detached bungalow situated on a large corner plot of approximately quarter of acre with gated driveway.

It is for sale through Hicks Hadley at £325,000. It has a fully fitted kitchen, a large utility, a guest WC, two reception rooms, three spacious bedrooms, a bathroom and gas central heating, double glazing where specified. The lower floor has a large garage and two workshops and there are large gardens, a driveway and garage.

Call 0121 585 6667 to book a viewing.

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Well-presented modern detached on a corner plot

This well presented modern detached property in Dorothy Adams Close, Cradley Heath lies on a large corner plot in a cul-de-sac.

It is for sale through Hicks Hadley at £250,000 with no chain.

It has a spacious lounge/dining room, a dining kitchen, a utility, a downstairs cloakroom/WC, four

CRADLEY HEATH

£250,000

good sized bedrooms, an en-suite, family bathroom, a double garage, off road parking for several cars, a rear garden, gas central heating and double glazing. In more detail the living room has a bay window and a feature fireplace and laminate flooring and an archway to the dining area with French doors to the garden. The dining kitchen includes an integrated electric cooker with gas hob and French doors to the garden, laminate flooring, room for further appliances and tiled splash backs.

Contact Hicks Hadley on 0121 585 6667.

K. Stuart Swash

AUCTION – 14TH MARCH 2017

42 BIRCHES PARK ROAD, CODSALL

Large three bedroomed Home, two Reception, fitted Kitchen, smart Bathroom, Gas C.H, Double Glazing, Garage, attractive Gardens. epc.C71

Guide: £144,000 - £149,000

VIEWING

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, 24th & 25th FEBRUARY @ 10.45 a.m.

593 STAFFORD ROAD, WOLVERAMPTON

Ready for modernisation -popular district -well located three bed Semi., Bathroom, Two Reception, Kitchen, Laundry, G.F. wc., Garage facility, long Rear Garden est. 100ft epc.TBA

Guide: £93.000 - £98,000

VIEWING

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, 24th & 25th FEBRUARY @ 9.45 a.m.

68 THE LINDENS, NEWBRIDGE, WOLVERHAMPTON

Well located Ground Floor Flat 14ft. Lounge, Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, smart Bathroom Garage, pleasant rear outlook. epc.E54

Guide: £48,000 - £53,000

VIEWING

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, 24th & 25th FEBRUARY @ 11.45 a.m.

240 BIRMINGHAM NEW ROAD, LANESFIELD, WOLVERHAMPTON

Elevated position, large Dormer Bungalow Porch, Lounge, big Dining Kitchen, Two Double Bedrooms, Bathroom, 19ft. F.F. Bedroom, Store Room, Gas CH., DG. Gardens, 24ft. Garage. epc F39

Guide £115,000 - £120,000

VIEWING

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, 24th & 25th FEBRUARY @ 11.00 a.m.

(Access via Mount Road and Lane Road)

14 WALSALL ROAD, WILLENHALL

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Dudley Chronicle Thursday, February 23, 2017

The front architecture is new, reflecting the 'face' of the new Astra

A benchmark for family motoring

By John Griffiths

Vauxhall's Zafira has always been about flexibilty and a family-friendly character: a car to carry seven people or the amount of cargo that would otherwise require a medium van.

It's no surprise then that this multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) has established itself as a class leader, even though SUV-styled cars are to some extent stealing its thunder along with that of hatchbacks and saloons.

That might seem a bit odd when these SUVs (most of which don't have off-road or even bad weather capability) can't match the Zafira for sheer space and flexibility, but trends come and go in the motor industry like any other. But loyal MPV owners will be pleased to know Vauxhall is not only sticking with the Zafira, it has just launched a new and much improved version.

The latest Zafira Tourer is bigger, tuned to provide a better drive and is kitted out with some of the latest computer, connectivity and safety technology, including the unique to Vauxhall OnStar system which could save your life or get your car back if it's stolen.

List prices range from £18,665 to £29,630 and engines include a 1.4 litre petrol turbo with 140PS, a 1.6 litre, 136PS turbo diesel and a 2.0 litre diesel with 170PS.

The test car was a mid-range at £23,370, in Tech Line and powered by the bigger engine and six-speed manual gearbox. That seems like value for money bearing in mind the high levels of standard equipment, space and practicality compared to many hatchbacks and SUVs in the same price bracket.

While the most popular engine choice is likely to be the small, 1.6 diesel, the 2.0 litre diesel is worthy of consideration. Of course it's quicker but I'm not sure an extra second or so off the traffic lights sprint is all that important in this type of car. The real benefit is the 400Nm of torque which gives the engine tremendous flexibility and refinement.

Both engines are noted for their quiet, smooth operation, too, but the 1.6 will no doubt appeal to those who appreciate extra fuel and tax effiency. Don't write off the petrol alternative, though. While the capacity is just 1,400cc, remember this engine is turbocharged and so is endowed with a lot more power and torque – 140PS, 200NM and a sprint time of under ten seconds to 62mph. The official fuel economy figure is 42.2mpg and 158g/km. It can also save on your initial outlay, as model for model it's cheaper to buy than the diesel options.

The interior is still one of the most flexible in the market, with each of the five second and third row seats capable of being folded flat with just one hand. Those in the second row slide forward in the same flowing movement, allowing easier access to the third row.

With seven passengers on board, cargo space is limited but with five adults on board it's an impressive 710 litres, rising to a van-like 1,880 litres. You can, of course, fold down one, two, three four or five seats to juggle between passengers and cargo which makes it ideal for business use and the family.

The dash is dominated bv the colour touchscreen controller which is multifunctional, controlling features such as navigation, audio and connectivity.

The lounge style seating includes a centre armrest with storage solutions, and electronic climate control, steering wheel mounted remote controls, privacy rear windows, cruise control, speed limter, electric windows and automatic headlights and wipers are standard, too.

The test car was also fitted with OnStar, the Vauxhall system which allows you to talk to an adviser at the company's Luton headquarters at the touch of a button. They can advise on the condition of the car such as oil levels or tyre pressures, or download a route into the car's navigation system. It can even help you find a 'lost' car by switching on the lights or sounding the horn. But more seriously, if your car is stolen it can track it and disable the ignition until the police arrive. There's also an 'SOS' which, if pressed, can allow the operator to send the emergency services to your location.

Such technology, combined with space, practicality and comfort, makes the new Zafira Tourer the benchmark for family motoring.

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Overhauled BMW keeps its character

By Sharon Walters

According to BMW, the 5 Series is the car most people associate the brand with – more so than even the iconic 3 Series. So when it's time for a new generation of the car that everyone in the premium executive segment has to beat, it's a pretty big deal.

With this in mind, it's no surprise to see that BMW has overhauled the outgoing car without changing its character much at all. The exterior styling is now more taut and muscular, while the technology on display in the cabin is second to none.

The bits you can't see are totally new, too. The chassis has been renewed and the extensive use of lightweight materials contributes to an overall weigh saving of 100kg.

The front axle is a new double-wishbone set-up, coupled with a five-link system at the rear that helps give the kind of ride that rivals can only dream of matching.

It's a case of evolution rather than revolution in the looks department, but the minor changes that have been made turn the old car's bland styling into something altogether more purposeful. Inside, the interior is more functional than luxurious, but there's no denying the quality. The new touchscreen protrudes tablet-like from the dashboard and helps to de-clutter the centre console by moving more functions into its maze of menus.

Few cars ride quite as sumptuously as this 5 Series. But most impressive of all is the fact that this doesn't translate to the kind of wallowy cornering ability more commonly seen in fishing boats in a rough sea.

The large leather chairs – a pricey optional extra – are instantly comfortable, and with a wide range of movement from them and the steering wheel, finding a driving position is easy. It all means that even after a four-hour stint behind the wheel, we arrived at our destination feeling fresh.

If cavernous load space is what you need, you might be better waiting for the estate version. However, the saloon 5 Series isn't lacking for luggage capacity. There are 530 litres of boot space, which makes it just 10 litres smaller than an equivalent Mercedes E-Class.

Families will be pleased to know that the interior is even more spacious than before with marginally more headroom and legroom all around.

BMW is pretty proud of the safety technology it has implemented, the most significant can be found in the Driving Assistant Plus package, which is a £2,250 option. Lane departure warning, traffic jam assist and adaptive cruise control are among those included here.

Some of these features can be annoyingly obtrusive in normal driving, but activate cruise control along with the lane departure system and the car becomes semi-autonomous, allowing you to take your hands off the wheel for short periods. It's really quite spooky.

The most popular engine variant will be the 2.0-litre four-cylinder unit in the 520d because it keeps both the taxman and the fleet manager happy. With 185bhp and 400Nm of torque it's no slouch, but comes with claimed economy figures of 68.9mpg and 108g/km of CO2. However, those who can get away with it should go for the 530d. The 3.0-litre diesel makes 258bhp, but it's the way the 620Nm of torque is so deliciously delivered that delights.In fact, prod the drive mode selector into 'sport' and take control of the slick automatic gearbox via the wheel-mounted paddles and we'd argue it's actually more fun than the sportier 540i petrol.

For such a big car, the BMW 5 Series doesn't half handle well, and that's all down to improvements in the chassis. The car's 100kg lighter than before thanks to the extensive use of lightweight materials, while a new double-wishbone front axle has been tuned to find the balance between driving dynamics and comfort – we reckon the engineers have nailed it.

The 5 Series' bread and butter is devouring motorway miles, and here it excels. The ride quality is unparalleled and means that however many hours a driver has to stare out of the windscreen, they'll feel relaxed at their destination.

Parking is made easy thanks to a suite of driver assists that use the central touchscreen to give both a bird's-eye view of the car's surroundings and a nifty rear-view camera.

The best goodies in the 5 Series are optional extras. It packs better standard kit than before, including a fully digital instrument display, LED headlights and widescreen navigation, which makes it competitive with rivals in this segment.

The new infotainment system is one of the best on the market. The touchscreen is as responsive and easy to use as any dedicated tablet, while the widescreen display means a lot of information can be displayed without it getting too cluttered.

BMW 5 SERIES, FROM £35,245

New generation Series 5 BMW – handles well with improvements to the chassis and inside it packs better standard kit than before

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Professional Tree Services
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BRIERLEY HILL

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STUARTS PLUMBING AND HEATING
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✓ Central Heating & Boilers
✓ Power Flushing
✓ Boiler Servicing & Repairs
✓ Kitchens & Bathrooms
✓ All other aspects of plumbing work undertaken
Call for a FREE no obligation quote and for all other offers
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✔ Tiling
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✔ Soffits
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One of the Leading Roofing Companies
No Job too Small, No Job too Big
● Gutters Cleaned From £15
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● Pointing Work From £15
SPECIAL OFFERS
on all UPVC Fascias, Gutters, New Roofs/Slate Tile & Felt and Garage Roofs.
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- Flat roof specialist
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FREE QUOTES AVAILABLE
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All types of flat roofing systems
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SERVING THE BLACK COUNTRY FOR OVER 25 YEARS
24 HOUR EMERGENCY CALL OUT!
Guttering & Fascia Board Specialist
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• Flat Roofs • Lead Work • Chimneys
Fully Insured - Free Quotes - All Work Guaranteed
Day: 07764 939002
Evening: 01384 459245
cotterellspm@gmail.com

To advertise your business and reach more than 53,000 potential customers...
1 Call us on... 01384 399903
2 E-mail us at... martin.cartwright@expressandstar.co.uk
3 Post to... Martin Cartwright , Dudley Chronicle, 3 Market Street, Stourbridge DY8 1AB

Classified Ads

Buy Local, **Sell** Local

funeral directors

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DAINTY & DOWNING
Dudley 01384 252772

Independent family run Funeral Directors
24 hour service
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monumental masons

S. A. LOCKETT & SON LIMITED 337 Tettenhall Rd, Wolverhampton WV6 0JZ. 01902 751825. info@salockettandson.co.uk www.salockettandson.co.uk

1 Family

elderly & disabled

Capitol Mobility-Bilston
ARE YOU ON DLA OR PIP'S!
YOU COULD HAVE A SCOOTER OR ELECTRIC WHEELCHAIR ON WEEKLY TERMS!
01902 409929
www.capitolmobility.co.uk

ACORN / BROOKS STRAIGHT STAIRLIFTS Wanted. Working or not, rapid removal. 07967 003600

MOBILITY SCOOTER

Excellent condition. Four wheels. Fits easily in a car boot.

Can deliver.

£275.

07905 770683.

MOBILITY SCOOTER

Medium size, 4 wheels, new batteries, super condition.

Absolute bargain £395.

Can possibly deliver.

0121 440 2867 /

07804 239956.

MOBILITY SCOOTERS from £350 can deliver, servicing available. Call: Powerlink, Blackheath 01384 255019 / 07831 246292.

STANNAH STAIRLIFT. Straight run over 12 stairs. Can be seen working. £750 ono. 01384 270683.

WREKIN STAIRLIFTS reconditioned lifts from £799. New available. 01952 405397/07897 273617

2 Leisure Time

camping equipment

BARGAIN

CARAVAN EQUIPMENT

Dorema porch awning, 380cm x 240cm, as new, still boxed.

Cost New £800 sell £595 ono.

Two x 40litre water butts. £20 each.

One Wastemaster. £15.

One Tow hitchlock. £20.

Two inner tents £10 each.

Two Folding metal chairs £7 each.

All in good condition.

01902 783174.

car boot sales

COL'S CAR BOOT & MARKET
OPEN EVERY WEDNESDAY & SUNDAY
at Himley Bypass, B4176
Ring Colin: 07973 904585
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OPEN ALL YEAR

caravans / motorhomes

We Want Your Motorhome
Finance Cleared
Fast Secure Payment
Top Prices Paid
Please Call
AEG on 01384 848439 or
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COSALT MADEIRA HOLIDAY STATIC CARAVAN

35 x 12, DG, CH, 2 bedroom, on 11 months licence, with onsite clubhouse.

Stourport-on-Severn.

£13,500.

For full details call

07810 044813 or 07801 530894.

LET US SELL YOUR CARAVAN/ Motorhome for you and get the best possible price. Severn Valley Leisure, DY8 4HP. 01384 390183

QUALITY CARAVAN

WILLERBY STATIC CARAVAN

Mid Wales, DG, CH, 2 bedroom and 1 sofa bed. Large decking area overlooking river. Ground rent paid till March 2018.

£10,000 ono.
07855 483259.

caravans wanted

WANTED ALL CARAVANS
Any age or condition
Also motorhomes wanted.
TOP PRICES PAID
Immediate collection.
CALL THOMAS
07717 280 996

WANTED

CARAVAN WANTED

Cash on pick up asap. Caravan wanted. call me any time on

07717 090817

TOURING CARAVAN WANTED, no objecton to work, anything considered. Please telephone 07980 365757.

fishing

FISHING TACKLE WANTED anything considered. New or Old 01902 754011 or 07931 568716

jumble sales / fetes

JUMBLE SALE

(Tuesday, February 28)

Kingswinford, Royal British Legion. DY6 9JG.

Starts 7.30pm.

Admission 20p.

sports & leisure

FULL SET of Golf Clubs for sale. £100. 01384 896654.

FreeAds
IT'S FREE, IT'S EASY
For items upto £250.
Online at
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holidays

caravan parks

LUXURY HOLIDAY HOME for Sale on 5* Park, DG, CH, bar & restaurant. Child & pet friendly, 20 acres walking woodland £24,995 inc 2017 site fees Call 01568 708 326.

mind, body & soul

massage

TRADITIONAL CHINESE Massage 'Hot Stones'. 01902 903659, 07741 696099. Compton WV6 8AF

what's on

markets

BESCOT SUNDAY MARKET
OPEN EVERY SUNDAY
Banks's Stadium, Walsall FC
WS1 4SA, FREE PARKING, J9 M6
07889 975701 All hard standing

3 Home & Services

furniture

BROWN LEATHER suite, 2, two seater sofas, 1 reclining chair, £250 ono. 01902 674714.

LEATHER RECLINING Three piece suite, two tone grey, 6 months old. £800 ono. 01902 784911.

items for sale

HAVE YOU CHECKED your advertisement today? We would respectfully remind advertisers that it is their responsibility to inform the publishers of any mistakes or inaccuracies on the first day of publication.

in your garden

LAWN TRACTOR

22hp, 42 inch cut with collector, totally new and unused.

Cost £4,000.

Will accept £1,995.

Can deliver.

Telephone 07710 169150.

items wanted

ALL GOLD 9CT £300 PER OUNCE
CASH PAID TODAY
No amount is too small
A GENUINE LADY BUYER
All Beswick • Doulton • Worcester Moorcroft •Lladro • Old coins
• WATCHES • COSTUME JEWELLERY
• Diamonds and Gold Coins • Clocks • Paintings
• ALL SILVER • All Oriental Items
Pre'47 silver coins All war medals etc
ANYTHING OLD & INTERESTING
01922 495066 or 07971 783206

A BEST CASH PRICE

FOR ALL RAILWAY COLLECTIONS
Any gauge or age
Hornby/Bachmann/Bowmans/ Roundhouse/Graham/Farsh/ any live steam. Also Die Cast, Corgi, Dinky, Spot On.
01384 836219 / 07891 713547
thetrainmaster67@hotmail.com

A BEST PRICE PAID All collectables from wars wanted by collector, medals, helmets, swords etc. 07511 500337.

GOOD PRICES PAID for blu-rays & modern clean clothes adults and childrens, can collect. 07551 168310.

J40 PEDAL CAR Auto cycle, Sinclair C5, Vintage vending machines, anything old, Old fire arms. 01384 484309 / 07930 949337.

MYFORD METAL cutting lathe wanted, Myford super 7/ML7 wanted any condition considered. 01922 445739.

OLD POCKET and wrist watches wanted, all conditions, also menders clearances, parts, etc. 01746 765278. 07773 345218.

READERS ARE ADVISED to carefully consider all of their options before agreeing to the sale of any of their items.

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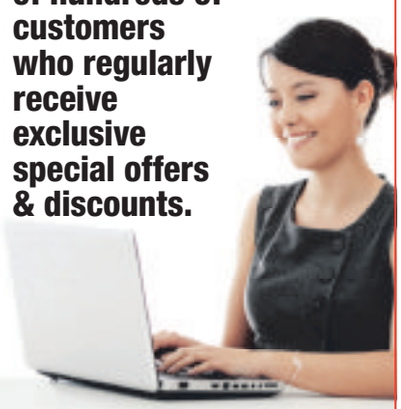
and become one of hundreds of customers who regularly receive exclusive special offers & discounts.



ClassifiedAds

RECORDS WANTED

50's, 60's, 70's, Rock, Punk, Rock / Roll, Jazz / 90's Indie. Collections bought. Music Memorabilia, Promo Posters, autographs, etc, etc. Top prices paid.

Telephone 07966 252439.

SPECTRUM GAMES Wanted, plus any Spectrum 128k +2 computer wanted also any old Crash magazines wanted. 01902 892918.

t.v. / home entertainment

service

AERIAL AND TV SPECIALIST Any TV Repairs, Plasma, LED etc, CCTV cameras supplied & fitted. Any area. Free Estimates. 7 days. Digital aerials, Sky installation. Wall mounts / TV setups. 07850 330251.

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

"TV Link are really pleased with their response from their Classified Campaign"

Bill - TV Link

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

specialists at your service

aerials

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

"I am very pleased with the response I get from my Classified Advertising Contract"

Steve - AA Digital Aerials

For great business results call
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ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

ALAN JONES
THE ORIGINAL AERIAL SPECIALIST, THE BEST!
Est 1955 - 59 years at the top!
Recommended by thousands
Genuine, honest, 100% reliable
WE HAVE WATCHED THEM ALL COME AND GO
Call: 01902 885985
ANY PROBLEM SOLVED

A AERIAL AND SKY SPECIALIST CCTV cameras fitted/tv wallmount, free quote/any area. 07850 330251

CLEAR VISION AERIALS Freeview, FreeSat, Sky, CCTV, Aerials from £79. Dishes from £79. OAP DISCOUNT. Tel: 01902 752036.

M&S DIGITAL Aerials fitted from £75.00. Satellite installed, multi room installs and repairs. Same day service. 07542 035943.

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domestic cleaning

CLEAN (midlands ltd) FOR YOU
Domestic Cleaning & Ironing Service.
Friendly, Reliable & Trustworthy.
Call Anita on: 07854 163 804.

domestic repairs & services

SAME DAY Low Cost Repairs. Washers, Dryers Electric Cookers. 12 mths guarantee. 07850 355552.

drain clearance

ALL DRAIN AND SEWER Blockages cleared fast. Call Fast Clean: 01902 736424.

driveways & patios

CRETE BY DESIGN
Concrete Imprinting
• BLOCK PAVING • TARMACING
FREE QUOTES
01902 489633 (day)
or 01902 604187 (eve)

electrical services

A BARGAIN PRICED house re-wire. fuseboards etc. Grahams Electrical. 01902 842739, 07783 471949.

ALL HOME ELECTRICS NAPIT registered. Fully insured. For a free quote call 07583 320318.

fencing

PORTWAY FENCING
SPECIAL OFFER
6 x 5 Heavy Duty Lap Panels
£12.95 each
Fitting service available or DIY.
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Mon - Fri 8am - 4.30pm
Sat 8am - 12noon
83 Portway Rd, W'bury
DELIVERY AVAILABLE
www.portwayfencing.co.uk

ACE FENCING. A better quality panel. Supply/Fit. Free Quotes: 31 Bank St. WV10 9DU.01902 723910

gardening services

GARDENS TIDIED from £5 per garden. 25 years experience. Call 01902 713106 / 07813 184086.

gas fitting

A BOILER BREAKDOWN, COOKER, FIRE,
FITTED-SERVICED-REPAIRED
Landlord certs.
All areas covered.
J&E Heating.
Call John:
01902 562664
/07969 687832

GAS SERVICES
• Boilers • Cookers
• Fires • Gas Checks
• Landlord Certificates
• Gas Leaks Traced
Fitted, Serviced and Repaired
Same Day Service
Free Quotes
DISCOUNTS FOR OAPs
Call: 01902 366855/
07761 973975

READERS ARE ADVISED

To check that anyone carrying out any Gas work is Gas Safe Registered.

It is an offence under the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 to carry out gas work in the UK without

being on the Gas Safe Register.

guttering

PROPERTY SOLUTIONS
A*1 GUTTERING
cleaned, repaired, replaced, facias/ soffits, UPVC washdowns, all roofing/ repointing work. Free quotes, 8am-8pm
01902 722447

handyman services

YOUR LOCAL HANDYMAN
FREE QUOTES
All work guaranteed, Most trades covered, References available on request. No job too big or too small!
CALL MIKE: 07947 621047
0121 6010479

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

I average around 1 to 2 phone calls a day from customers as a direct result of my Classified Advertising. I am very happy with my response levels.

Mr Causer.

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

LOCK & CARPENTRY Plumbing, Plastering, Slabbing and Roofing. 01902 683100 or 07935 906384.

house clearances

A ABSOLUTE BEST cash price paid for house clearances and bereavements. Also removals undertaken. **07852 172641 / 07710 360327**

YMCA REQUIRE FURNITURE Free Collection. Telephone 01384 231714 for details.

plumbing & heating

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

"We are really happy with our Classified advertising package and the business it brings us."

Martin - Centra Heat

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01902 319 191
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Brought to you by Express & Star

Keiron Jones Plumbing & Heating
Full heating systems £2200
Boiler Changes £1100
Longer warranty available upon request, fires and surrounds also available.
For Free Quotes Call:
01902 403823 07811 855231

K NASH & SON CH, combi boiler & 6 rads £2200. 7 year warranty available 01902 790327/ 07973 721206. www.knashandsonheating.co.uk

AAA OVEN CLEANING, Ovens, Hobs, Aga / Range / Micro / Extractors. 01902 689418 / 07910 921736

painters / decorators

CALL M & B DECORATORS
City & Guilds
No job too small
Free Quote
01902 494555

A PROFESSIONAL DECORATING service by RC Decorating. Free competitive quotes: 07773 025880.

LOVE 2 WALLPAPER
Reliable & Friendly, Professional
Female Painters & Decorators
Attention to detail, competitive prices.
For the Perfect Finish with minimum hassle.
Plastering & Coving Work Undertaken
01384 287577 or 07812 484194
www.love-2-wallpaper.co.uk

C I PAINTING & DECORATING Over 30 yrs experience,City & Guilds approved. Free Quotes. 07913 732756 or 01902 650716.

C&D DECORATING City & Guilds / Wallpapering. Tiling and Flooring. Free quotes, call 07973 286288.

plans prepared

ADAM DESIGN, Building Plans. Drawn and submitted to council. Tel: 01902 620200 / 07841 654037. Email: adamdesign@sky.com

BUILDING Plans: Prepared/submitted. K J Bradley 01902 373248 07792 165767. www.plans4u.co.uk

plumbers

G M PLUMBING SERVICES Complete Bathrooms, Kitchens, Taps Showers,Blockages 07976 012468

LAURIE KENNEDY domestic plumbing, no job too small, Insured. No call out fee: 07901 345884.

removals

A & M CHEAP REMOVALS
Local
Careful Firm
Full or Part loads
Call Don:
07749 941319

A2B REMOVALS Cheap and reliable removal service. Insured. 07817 842980 or 01902 744829.

CALL DEAN NOW: For all your Removal needs. 07429 453209/ 01902 830870 / 01384 940260.

KT HOUSE REMOVALS
12 years experience.
SINGLE ITEMS TO FULL LOADS.
LOCAL OR DISTANCE. FULLY INSURED.
Free Quotes - Call Ric on:
07771 727119

KINGS OF THE ROAD REMOVAL Single Items/Full loads from £20. OAP discount. Andy 07512 395370, Keith 07545 618231.

KINGSWINFORD REMOVALS AND HOUSE CLEARANCES
We move anything.
Professional service,
45 years' experience,
DFS approved and we take the stress away.
Please call:
07966 281957

CENTRA HEAT
Boiler Servicing inc Free Landlords Certificate.
Power Flushing, Boiler/ System Repairs
£200 OFF/Trade in old boiler
Installed in March. T&C apply
01902 845211

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2. Call our Classified sales team on **01902 317 878**

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ClassifiedAds
BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL
Brought to you by Express & Star

ClassifiedAds

01902 317878 | classifiedads.expressandstar.co.uk

roofing

ONE STOP ROOFING
The Flat Roofing Specialists
Specialising in: Felt, Fibreglass & Tiling, Repointing & Chimney Repairs, Fascias and Guttering.
FOR 1 MONTH ONLY
GET YOUR FLAT ROOF REPLACED WITH FIBREGLASS FOR THE SAME PRICE AS A FELT ROOF & GUARANTEED FOR 25 YEARS
(Felt only 10 year guarantee)
Family Business est 30 Years
0800 0855277 or 07538471274

MG ROOFING Flat roofs, tiling, roof repairs, fascias and gutters. Call 01902 238989 / 07580 465449.

S T ROOFING All roofing work carried out. Call: 01902 884705 / 07841 842824

SF ROOFING & GUTTERING
25% OFF
25 YEARS EXPERIENCE!
Flat, Main roofs, rubber or felt, repaired and replaced, all repointing. Guttering repaired and replaced.
BEAT ALL QUOTES GUARANTEED
Call Sean 01902 829158 8am to 8pm

plastering

DOMESTIC PLASTERING
rendering & small building work undertaken. 40 years experience. For a free quote
Call Roy
07887 495726
07583 643932

M & S PLASTERING & BUILDING Services. Home/Garden Improvements.Mark or Sara: 07741 770897

STEVES PLASTERING SERVICE Clean and Reliable, All Work Undertaken, All Areas. Call 0121 567 5919 / 07977 262943.

showers

SHOWERS
Supplied/Fitted
Replaced/Repaired
Bath to Shower Conversions
Call James for a FREE quote.
07908 052470 / 01902 758494

skip hire

MT SKIPS & GRAB HIRE
Save £££s
All size skips and all areas covered
Same day delivery faster than a phone call!!!
Open 7 days a week
SCRAP CARS REMOVED FOR FREE
07920 88 57 74 or 01384 24 09 56

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

"Thanks to our Classified advertising in the Express & Star we are really busy!

It definitely works for us!"

Grinsells Skip Hire.

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

AT M&M SKIPS
Fast, friendly service
All areas covered
All sizes
Same day service
Freephone
0800 619 0189
07904 915016

BIG JOHN MOVES RUBBISH! No Skips, we load, fast friendly service, 25 Lister Rd, Dudley DY2 8JR, Est 35 years, 01384 232359.

AN ABSOLUTE AFFORDABLE CASTLE SKIP HIRE
Mini, midi and large skips
GRAB HIRE AND MINI DIGGER AVAILABLE
01384 237577
01902 405745
07719 671845

STONES SKIP HIRE
0121 557 1480 / 07886 721875
www.stonesskiphire.co.uk

upholstery

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS

"I am very happy with my Express & Star and Chronicles Advertising Campaign"

Gary Downes - Bilston Upholstery

For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

AT BILSTON UPHOLSTERY Your suite re-upholstered / repaired or cleaned. Free Est: 01902 404698.

UPHOLSTERY SERVICES 3pcs/ springs/caravans/pubs/club/antiques. 01902 689844 / 07817 842980.

4 Pets & Animals

equestrian corner

ALL READERS are advised to check if Horses have the required Passport information.

GRAZING WANTED for horses, upto 20 acres, prepared to fence field. Any area considered. 01384 78588 / 07572 687123.

IFOR WILLIAMS 505 Trailer, blue, alloy floor, kept in barn. Good condition. £1,700. 07986 899681 / 01743 719582.

guns & dogs

NOTICE TO ADVERTISERS
Advertisers must ensure that they meet all necessary legal requirements for owning and using guns.

AIR GUNS, VINTAGE/ ANTIQUE GUNS, SHOT GUNS, TAXIDERMY- BIG BORE GUNS, TRAPS ETC WANTED.
07968 624202

vets

Express & Star
THIS SPACE COULD BE PROMOTING YOUR BUSINESS
Every day our customers get a great response from Classified Advertising.
So could you by calling our friendly experienced Sales Advisors on 01902 319191.

pets corner

GREYHOUNDS MAKE WONDERFUL PETS
All neutered, innoculated and microchipped.
Call 01922 412212 or
www.rgtwolverhampton.co.uk
RGT Wolverhampton
@RGTWolves

NOTICE TO READERS
Please be aware that when purchasing a puppy there are some simple guidelines you can follow to ensure that you are not purchasing from a Puppy Farmer:
1. Try to ensure you visit the puppy whilst it is still with it's Mother.
2. Do not arrange to collect a puppy from any other location than that of the breeder.
3. Ensure that you are given any KC documentation, if pedigree.
Whilst Midland News Association publications take great care to avoid publication of advertisements from Puppy Farmers we cannot accept any liability should readers purchase from this kind of establishment.

DOG KENNEL and run, 5 months old, 6ft high x 6ft deep, x 4ft wide, £200 ono. Buyer to dismantle and collect. 0121 520 7125.

VERY SWEET CATS
One ten year old girl, other 11 year old boy, looking for home together, they are house cats, not used to going outside, suit retired persons or someone living alone.
07847 360784.

5 Business & Farming

business opportunities

READERS are recommended to take appropriate professional advice before entering any obligations.

commercial premises sale / let

MODERN SECURE UNIT To let, approx 1,200 sq ft, Cradley Heath, rent negotiable. 07585 124202.

business directory

accountants

ACCOUNTANCY SERVICES for Small Business. Competitive Rates. Call 01902 882600

commercial premises

UNITS AND OFFICE SPACE to let in Oldbury, West Bromwich and Walsall. Easy Terms. Ashmore Properties 0121 520 5318.

6 Property

accommodation to let

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

A TWO BED FIRST FLOOR FLAT Compton DS5 OK CH ORP 01902 686605

NOTICE TO READERS It is an offence under the Accommodation Agencies Act 1953, for an Agency to charge a fee simply for the registration of your requirements and/or supplying particulars of premises to let.

ONE BED studio flat, Cradley Road, Netherton, DY2 9RJ, very nice condition, £85pw. Also 2 bed apartment, Parkes Hall Road, Dudley, DY1 3SP, £120pw. 07850 589620.

SEDGLEY ONE BED self contained flat, suit single, mature person. No DSS/ref's required. 07948 182489.

land

SINGLE BUILDING plot, Bradmore, planning permission for Bungalow. £45,000. Exchange considered. 07774 898966. 01902 747180.

overseas property

NOTICE TO READERS
Readers are advised to seek independent legal advice before entering into any financial commitments.

plant, machinery & tools

properties wanted

WE PAY 100% of purchase price EVERY TIME!
BLACK COUNTRY HOMES
Sell your HOUSE - SIMPLE
You agree the price, we buy the house.
• NO AGENTS FEES • COMPLETION TO SUIT YOU
• FREE SOLICITORS • ANY HOUSE, ANY CONDITION
30 yrs
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or 01384 226086 24/7 www.black-countryhomes.co.uk

CASH NOW wolverhampton properties
FOR YOUR HOUSE
• Legal Fees Paid • No Fees • Any Condition
• Guaranteed Offer • Repossessions Stopped
We can buy your house in 2 days
0800 389 6788
01902 628047 Lines open 24 hours a day 7 days a week subject to terms

Need to sell your home fast?
We can help you make a fresh start
With solutions to suit ...
you can clear your debts and make a fresh start
Purchase Agreed Within 7 DAYS
ALL CIRCUMSTANCES CONSIDERED
COMPLETE ON DATE TO SUIT
FREE VALUATION AND LEGALS
FREE FRIENDLY ADVICE
LOCAL COMPANY
MARION | PROPERTY SOLUTIONS
WHY NOT CALL US TODAY
for an informal, friendly and confidential chat?
01384 930 979
*Terms and Conditions apply
OUR LINES ARE OPEN 24/7

ClassifiedAds BUY LOCAL, SELL LOCAL
BLACK COUNTRY HOMES
IT WORKS FOR ME
We have been advertising in the Express & Star and Chronicles for over 20 years and consider it a key part of our business with the regular flow of calls, which our advertising generates.
Black Country Homes
FOR GREAT BUSINESS RESULTS CALL
01902 319 191
Brought to you by Express & Star

BLACK COUNTRY HOMES

CLASSIFIEDS DELIVERS RESULTS
"We have been advertising in the Express & Star and Chronicles for over 20 years and consider it a key part of our business with the regular flow of calls, which our advertising generates."
Black Country Homes
For great business results call
01902 319 191
ClassifiedAds
Brought to you by Express & Star

Home Cash Buyer
Sell today, sign today, complete when u wish
£££ RENT BACK OPTIONS £££
Houses / Land Required
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7 Jobs

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We are looking to recruit two

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based in Cradley Heath. Hours of work Monday/Thursday 9.30pm - 6.00am; Friday 6.30pm - 3.00am (40 hrs per week).

Previous experience of working in the metal industry in a night shift environment would be advantageous. Duties to include picking orders, processing material and general warehouse duties.

The successful applicant will hold a current fork lift truck licence (counterbalance and reach).

We offer a competitive salary together with other benefits associated with a major company.

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FIRE ALARM ENGINEER
Delta Fire Systems Ltd require a qualified fire alarm engineer to join our fire alarm department. Full time position with a wide variety of work, working on own and in a team, The successful applicant must hold a clean driving license and be prepared to work away from home on occasions. £20k pa depending on experience
Please forward your CV in the first instance to sales@deltafiresystems.co.uk

NEWS DELIVERERS
needed in the Gornal Wood area of DY3-2
Please contact
Customer Services on 0800 174064.

ELECTRICIAN
Delta fire systems Ltd require a qualified Electrician to join our Electrical department. Full time position with a wide variety of work, working on own and in a team, The ability to test and inspect would be useful, The successful applicant must hold a clean driving license and be prepared to work away from home on occasions. £20k pa depending on experience
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PART-TIME - EXCEPTIONAL HOURLY RATE
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8 Motoring

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MAZDA TS2
Hatchback, 5-door, 59 plate. Metallic grey, alarm, air con, alloys, diamond bright. CD / radio, petrol, FSH. MoT October 2017. Only 27,000 miles, one owner.
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£1,650. o.n.o.
07538 750391.

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FORD FOCUS 1.6 ZETEC CLIMATE
5dr Hatchback, 2007, extras. Air con, CD, alloys, mats, heated front screen, 84,849 miles, SH, 12 month MoT, very good condition.
£1,649.
07739 267589.

LOW MILEAGE
SUZUKI ALTO
2014. Red, 5Dr, 12,000 miles, immaculate condition, full MoT. Genuine calls only.
£4,200.
01902 496149
or
07951 664184.

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that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

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FORD MONDEO 2.0 GHIA
2004 plate, 84k, same owner last 4 years, Blue, Long MoT.
£795.
07913 981460.

KIA CARENS CRDi LX
04, 5dr hatch, diesel, 63,000 miles, very good condition with fsh, 7 months MoT, AC, EW, CD, stereo, roof rails, anti theft system.
£1,200 ono
07436 868110.

SUZUKI IGNIS SPORT
2004, 75,000 Miles, 1.5L, 2 owners, Silver, abs, electric windows, air bag, 12 months MoT, central locking, pas, Alloys, CD, Recaro Seats, £995 ono
07402867767

LOOK
SUZUKI WAGON R 1.3GL+
52 reg, silver, 5-door, clean, reliable car, MoT, only 29,000 miles from new.
£450 ono
07817 435084.

AUTOMATIC
TOYOTA YARIS GLS AUTOMATIC, 1.3,
Nov 2000 reg, factory fitted sunroof, power steering, 3-dr, metallic black, MoT Nov 24, 2017, One former keeper. 65,000 miles,
£795 ono.
07923 132859

LOW MILEAGE
VAUXHALL CORSA DESIGN 1.2
04 reg, 5-door, excellent condition, 12 months MoT.
£1,375 ono
07572 608894.

MUST BE SEEN
VW POLO 1400
Full MoT, silver, good runner / condition inside and out, radio/CD, alloys.
£675 ono.
01902 862610.

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WANTED, CLASSIC Cars. Private cash buyer.Instant cash settlement. Any age. Any condition. 01630 652993 or 07773 462797.

commercial vehicles

MERCEDES SPRINTER Van 313, LWB, F reg, 02. 6 months MoT. 2 new tyres. New exhaust/tail pipe. £1,000. 07973 799218.

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AMAZING OFFER 5 lessons £40, 10 lessons £80. £20 an hour there after. Call now 07958 051263.

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Scrap & MOT Failures Best Prices Paid ELV Registered Spares Always Available
0121 557 0800 or 0121 557 0400. Oldbury Area.

vehicles wanted

CROWN MOTORS guarantee best price for your unwanted cars/vans. 07903 549849, buyer will call.

SMALL VAN wanted Berlingo or Peugeot Partner. 01902 713465. 07967 952821

spares & accessories

clutches / brakes / gearboxes

A CLUTCH CHANGE MOBILE
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9 Local Information

public & legal notices

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES
For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to
Marie Hogg on 01902 713146
or email marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk
(remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

BERNARD ROBERTS (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 14 Frayne Avenue Kingswinford West Midlands DY6 9DU, who died on 02/02/2017, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 05/05/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
WALDRONS SOLICITORS
813 High Street Kingswinford
West Midlands DY6 8AD T494875

INSOLVENCY ACT 1986

IN BANKRUPTCY
DUDLEY COUNTY COURT
NO 27 of 2003 **RE: MARTIN JOHN HUDSON**

Who at the date of the bankruptcy order 20/3/2003 resided at 12 Banklands Road, Dudley, West Midlands DY2 8BT. Lately residing at 33 Middle Park Road, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 2LL.

D.O.B: 23 July 1966

NOTE: the above-named was discharged from the proceedings and may no longer have a connection with the addresses listed.

I intend to pay within four months from *16th March 2017* (being the last day for proving) the first and final dividend of 25 p/£.

Creditors who have not yet proved their debts must do so by *16th March 2017* (being last day of proving) otherwise they will be excluded from the dividend. The required proof of debt form is available on the Insolvency Service website (www.bis.gov.uk/insolvency, select "Forms" and then form 6.37). Alternatively, you can contact my office at LTADT, PO Box 490, Ipswich, Suffolk IP1 1YR telephone 01473 383535 to supply a form.

Mr D Gibson, Official Receiver and trustee

KENNETH CHARLES JEWKES (Deceased)
Pursuant to the Trustee Act 1925 any persons having a claim against or an interest in the Estate of the aforementioned deceased, late of 371 Himley Road Gornal Wood Dudley West Midlands DY3 2PZ, who died on 21/06/2016, are required to send particulars thereof in writing to the undersigned Solicitors on or before 05/05/2017, after which date the Estate will be distributed having regard only to claims and interests of which they have had notice.
WALDRONS
Capstan House The Waterfront
Merry Hill West Midlands DY5 1XL
Anyone knowing of a Will, please contact Waldrons Solicitors of Capstan House The Waterfront Merry Hill West Midlands DY5 1XL, Reference: CLE/JEWKE26/1 T493339

10 Personals

personal

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Telephone 07429 650050.

MEET SEXY local women, genuine adult contacts. fast & discreet. Call 0330 022 6244/07008 026348.

YOUNG AT HEART 60 YEAR OLD LADY
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general

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Try it.. You'll love it!

Dates in ***YOUR*** region

Here's how to use your dating service ...

To ***Place*** your advert call:

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follow the simple instructions. You will also get ***£10 SMS CHAT CREDIT***

To ***Place*** your ad by text

Simply text **REG** followed by your first name, date of birth, area and your advert (max 155 characters) and send to **80098** **FREE** Standard Network rates apply.

YOU can now ***Date ONLINE*** or via your mobile just visit**:**

http://dating.expressandstar.com

To ***Reply*** to members call:

0906 500 3955

calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.

Have the adverts 6-digit box no written down and do ***key-it-in promptly*** when asked. Don't forget to leave contact details for replies.

To ***Reply*** by text:

Text... **REPLY26** (leave space) box number (leave space) and then enter your message & send to **80098** eg: **REPLY26** 123456 **hi get in touch...** then send to **80098** Successfully received messages cost £1.50 per SMS received (Max 160 characters). You must exchange 7 messages each before you can swap contact details. Messages may be moderated for your safety and security.

Been left a message? ***Pickup*** your replies on:

0906 500 3957

calls cost £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge.

THE biggest UK on-line database of 17 million UK REAL users waiting to meet ***you.. visit..*** **http://dating.expressandstar.com**

Single Women

REMEMBER: Calls cost £1.55 per minute plus your phone company's access charge. Texts cost £1.50 per message received.

CHLOE pretty single female 36yrs, dark hair/eyes, slim build, very lonely and looking for reliable discreet male for mutual companionship maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426079**

KATIE 35yrs, slender well educated brunette seeks no strings mutual pleasure with gent 40+ Must be discreet, married or single. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3003 Box 419673**

BROWN eyed Brummie female, 66, smoker, likes music, cinema, theatre, meals out, WLTM male 67-74 for LTR. **Text only. Mailbox: 5780679**

JANE, young 41, very broadminded seeks chap any age for discreet no strings fun, any age, no time wasters ACA. **Tel: No: 0906 515 3011 Box: 409715**

KELLY young attractive vivacious 48yr old lady, loves good food, cosy nights in/out, holidays etc, WLTM male for mutual companionship without ties. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425913**

SOPHIA young 40yrs, married but bored, seeks discreet adult fun, any area, all calls answered. **Tel: 0906 515 3019 Box: 413399**

EILEEN mid 60s seeks gent 50s-60s for friendship, possibly much more. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425341**

EMILY, mature well educated lady, blonde and smart and broadminded seeks gent any age for no strings fun. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3023 Box 421375**

KELLY young attractive vivacious 48yr old lady, loves good food, cosy nights in/out, holidays etc, WLTM male for mutual companionship without ties. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425913**

SARAH, 39yrs, married, seeking chap for no strings intimate times. Special friendship, mutual respect. Give me a call. **Tel: 0906 515 3031 Box 408291**

DONNA naughty 40's, pretty, loves nights in, gym, theatre, seeks someone to make me laugh, give lots of cuddles and go on fun dates. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425867**

TAMIKA, mature black beauty, hourglass figure and open minded. Pls call if you are discreet, broad minded and nice. I can travel and accommodate. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3007 Box 422365**

DAWN 33yr old female looking for companionship with understanding, non-jealous male 35-55yrs. Status unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425849**

CARLY, 34yrs, attractive and discreet military wife seeks no strings fun with respectable gent. **Tel: 0906 515 3039 Box 424419**

KAREN, 52, 5ft5, short browny/blond hair, green eyes, medium build, GSOH, loving, caring and kind, likes to do lots of things, likes a laugh, WLTM similar gent, hope to hear from you soon! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425917**

JEAN, 40, 5ft slim, busty blonde, new to dating and fed up of going through the pub scene, WLTM down to earth male for adult company. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425671**

RAPID MATCH
Simply tell us your age and location and we will match you immediately!
TEXT LOVE to 89990
or call 0906 500 5757
0906 rate £1.55 per min plus your phone company's access charge 89990 cost £1.50 per msg. To STOP text stop to 89990. Service provided by JMediauk Ltd RH16 3EG For Help call 0207 720 7130

ATTRACTIVE well educated lady, mid 30's, solvent, professional, seeks discreet broad minded gent. ACA. **Tel: 0906 515 3043 Box 425891**

ANETTA, black cuddly lady seeks man who knows what a woman needs. I'm very friendly and have time for you. Please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425933**

MELINDA, 52yrs, attractive and broad minded seeking chap any age for some fun. Couples also. **Text only Mailbox: 4131946**

JANE, attractive and young looking 60 something lady, active, outgoing with interesting personality, hoping to meet a kind gent for occasional meetings. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425931**

JOSIE, sexy black lady, 52yrs seeks adult times with concerning gent, any age, discreet clean, womanly figure. **Text only Mailbox: 4028592**

GILLY, slim petite lady, affectionate and loving, solvent with own home, hoping to meet gent, must be kind, looks unimportant. ACA/text answered. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425929**

MARIE, very attractive curvy widow, longing for romance, seeking country-loving male with old-fashioned values for lots of TLC. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425599**

SUE 38yrs enjoys most things, meals in/out, easygoing, broadminded, passionate, slightly feisty, looking for adult fun, call me if your interested in spicing things up. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425587**

KATHY 37, gorgeous mixed race single female, 5ft 8ins, slim, sensual, just looking for kind, trustworthy guy any age, looks or race. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425589**

JACKIE, 56yrs, attractive lady who is lots of fun seeks like-minded gent for nights in, days out and much much more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424491**

SUE, 60s lady, calling all gents who seek a mature solvent stylish lady, I can wine and dine you, you will have a nice time, call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424781**

JAN 41, fed up of sitting at home every weekend watching TV alone. Feel the same and looking for love? please contact me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425497**

KEEP DATING SIMPLE!
NO PROFILES TO FILL OUT
NO APPS TO DOWNLOAD
NO CREDIT CARDS
JUST STRAIGHT FORWARD AND SIMPLE DATING. IT'S NEVER BEEN EASIER!
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All messages received £1.50. Text STOP to 89990 to exit at any time Minimum 7 messages must be sent before contact details can be exchanged This service is not computer generated. Messages are responded to by realservice users. No meetings can be guaranteed. If arranging a meeting be sure to chose a public space and do not give personal details to people you have not met. Service provided by No Goats Ltd. Help: 0207720 7130 or email: support@jmedia.co.uk

ANNABELLE, sophisticated 28yrs hoping to meet older gent for adult fun, discreet, sincere, genuine advertiser. **Text only Mailbox: 4157105**

MERRY widow seeks lovely lonely gent for companionship. Please call, we can have a chat and see how we get on. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425927**

AMANDA, slim blonde, 50s seeks discreet gent for special times, mutually beneficial to us both. Call now. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425327**

SARA, 43, educated, independent, attractive female, nervous about dating through advertising, so pls don't disappoint me by not replying. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425703**

BROWN eyed female, 66, smoker, likes music, cinema, theatre, meals out, WLTM male 67-74 for LTR. **Text only. Mailbox: 5501142**

MICHELLE, 34, blonde blue-eyed happy female, loves heels and being feminine, OHAC, self sufficient, looking for male for long-term romance and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425669**

FEMALE, 66 yrs old, looks young, loves to laugh, n/s, who is genuine, caring and just wants to be loved again. **Text only. Mailbox: 5750819**

STACY 28yr old gorgeous brunette with buxom figure, intelligent and sensual, WLTM genuine male to get to know for fun dates and more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425457**

SARAH, 41, dizzy blonde, blue eyes, loves to dance seeks affectionate, hunky, fun male to make her laugh and brighten up her day. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425413**

YOUNG looking Indian female, 40, enjoys meals in/out, good company and conversation, looking for likeminded male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425493**

VIKKI 32yr old active female, confident, fit, loves night outs, looking for similar assertive male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425453**

SUE, attractive genuine lady, own home, loves to spoil a man, give me a call or text. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424673**

WANTED gent 50-76 for cosy nights in, good times, call or text me, you won't be sorry. I'm attractive and have lots to offer. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425339**

CAROL petite brunette, 38yrs, romantic, affectionate, outgoing, seeks similar sensual male for nice times together. Any age/looks. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425395**

LADY, looking for a mature, caring, loving gentleman, 55-70, to enjoy the finer things of life with and to be my best friend. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425309**

ROZ, 43, tactile, sensual, loves to dress up, and wear heels, seeks genuine caring male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425597**

JEAN, mature lady, genuine with many hobbies, slim, blonde and attractive. WLTM interesting gent with GSOH, must be cheerful, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424675**

KATHERINE, 28, tall, slim, dark, blue eyed female with many interests, OHAC, WLTM interesting male for dates, and more. Single dad welcome. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425287**

TRACY, 41, outgoing sun worshiper, OHAC, employed, looking for her Prince Charming to enjoy romantic holidays and good times together. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425257**

SHARON 36yr old single mum looking for loving guy who will appreciate me and help repair my broken heart. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425283**

SHELLEY slim N/S 40's female who likes the simple things in life so no big gestures required, seeking loyal loving male for hopeful LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425253**

SANDRA, smart, sophisticated lady young looking 60s, genuine and kind seeks gent with GSOH, looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424671**

HELEN, mid 50's naughty lady seeks some fun times with gent any age. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424493**

MARY, professional mature lady, loves life, very sociable and fun, seeks gent for good conversation and happy times. All calls and texts answered. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424775**

LINDA, 48yrs attractive brunette seeks gent for laughter, wining dining. Age unimportant. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425337**

LOVING lady, romantic and tactile seeks like-minded gent for special times, lets make each other feel special. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425325**

ATTRACTIVE Caribbean lady 59yrs, very jolly and fun seeking gent any age who must love good times. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425323**

ANDREA, 43, slim with long dark hair, blue eyes, loves to dance seeks romantic man to share intimate moments in or out. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 42522**

CAROL, mid 50s lady, young at heart, attractive and sexy (so I'm told)! Give me a call if you are a gent with GSOH. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424783**

THELMA, 59, slim, petite and Afro Caribbean, GSOH, trustworthy, honest and very caring, leave me your details if that sounds good to you! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425195**

THAI female 39, very beautiful, petite and self sufficient, loves cooking and home making, looking for caring, kind man/single dad. Please call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425191**

CHRISTINE, 40, attractive slim sporty brunette seeks fit well built male. Call me let's see what the future brings. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425061**

AMANDA, 36, tall, slim, busty brunette seeks man, any age, any area, for discreet daytime fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418117**

NAUGHTY curvy 46yr old lady, outgoing and bubbly with a naughty side and lots of banter, WLTM chap 30+. If you are married even better. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424543**

LOUISE, 29, curvy red haired female, been hurt in the past seeks male to buy her flowers and mend her broken heart. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425041**

LYN, 47, curvy quiet sensitive brunette but with a wild side. It could be exciting to know me! **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425013**

MELANIE, 49yrs, varied interests, attractive, sensual lady seeks gent any age or status, call, see what happens. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424337**

KAREN, 47, an attractive blue-eyed redhead, curvy size 16, likes films, football, pubs, reading, seeking likeminded male for nights in/out, hopefully more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425057**

JULIE attractive 35yr old female with a great body, looking for no strings attached evening meets. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425037**

MARY, passionate honest slim blue-eyed blonde, 39yrs, likes nights in/out, looking for affectionate male, any age to spend adult fun times. Interested? call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425009**

DONNA, 42, bright bubbly blue eyed blonde looking for someone to enjoy life and love to the full with. Call me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424873**

RETIRED happy, caring, attractive female, likes gardening, travel, animals, comedy, seeks tall, funny, kind chap, Shropshire. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 411459**

SUZANNA, 45, lonely beautiful classy French lady looking for happy decent reliable very sexy man for lots of TLC and good times. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424847**

SARAH, young looking curvy 41yr old female, bored with everyday routines, WLTM up for some fun discreet and extremely broadminded younger male. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424827**

DEBBIE, 50, petite blonde looking for some fun and adventure with similar fun loving mature male. Looks unimportant. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424799**

Single Men

SEMI retired business man, early 60s, slim, well travelled, fit, tanned, good looking, solvent and very discreet, WLTM female, 35-55, for daytime fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425183**

MALE, 60s, 5ft10, slim build, looking to meet female, for a mature adult relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426053**

MALE, 58, works in agriculture, lives in North Shropshire area, likes the countryside, days at the coast even in the winter, meals out, looking for loving, caring, country girl, 50s-60s. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 426037**

SINGLE male, 31 years old, brown eyes, black hair, 6ft, seeks single slim athletic build lady similar age for fun, hopefully more. **Text only. Mailbox: 4765584**

JAY, attractive, 6ft2, single father, loves a laugh and a giggle, looking for a lady for evenings out, company and maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424303**

CHRISTIAN, 57, 6ft, dark, likes walking, nice meals and socialising, looking for discreet times with a similar fun lady. If you are interested please contact me. I look forward to hearing from you. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425947**

STEVE, 59, sincere and genuine, likes pub meals, country walks and cinema, seeks Chinese, Tia, Black, Asian or Italian lady, looks unimportant but personality is, for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425831**

I am looking for a lady friend to enjoy my retirement with. I enjoy going out for meals and would like some company. **Text only. Mailbox: 5777872**

CALLING all ladies 40+ who would like to be wined, dined and romanced by attractive gent, 54 years please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425943**

PROFESSIONAL gent, mid 60s loves holidays, wining dining, shows in London, seeking similar minded lady to romance. Own house car. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425941**

JOHN, mid sixties widower, cultured and interesting, solvent with own home. WLTM lady 55+ for genuine companionship. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425939**

GENUINE single gent, 55yrs, seeks friendship hopefully leading to true love with lady 35-55, looks unimportant. Please call or text me. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425937**

SOLVENT gentleman, young 70s, loves life seeking a lady of any age to spoil and pamper, take on holidays, wine and dine. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425935**

ADVENTUROUS 36-year-old male, slim, dark hair, has many interests, seeks female for friendship, maybe more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 417235**

MARRIED businessman, mid fifties, seeks lady for discreet adult fun. Any age/looks unimportant. **Text only. Mailbox: 5534019**

MALE, 60, tall and slim, WLTM older female of larger build, any age, any status, for adult fun. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425807**

TALL male, 58, seeks larger woman, any age, for discreet fun, married or single. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425643**

GENUINE male, 37, friendly and easygoing, enjoys sport and keep fit, WLTM genuine female 25-45, for friendship/relationship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 420253**

TALL, dark, attractive male, 57, WLTM an attractive female for discreet daytime fun, 25-50. Can travel. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425759**

MALE, late 60s, medium build, 5ft10, n/s, car owner, likes meals out, holidays, walks, WLTM slim, attractive female who enjoys similar activities for LTR. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425757**

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ATTRACTIVE Shrewsbury male, 50s, WLTM an attractive female, any age/status, for discreet daytime fun and excitement, ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 422801**

GARY, 46, 5ft10, blue eyes, GSOH, likes football, quiet nights in, nights out, cinema, walking, travelling, looking for a likewise woman, 35-50, bubbly and fun loving with a GSOH. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425441**

I'M Andy, 52, looking for a lady, 50-65, for long term relationship, so text me and lets see what happens. **Text only. Mailbox: 5396692**

MATURE male, 50, medium-build, varied interests, seeks true Christian female, 35-45, who enjoys evenings in and dining out, for friendship or possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419283**

ATTRACTIVE male, 58, seeks adventurous female, 50-70, for close fun. Any status or size. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425535**

DAN 46, easy going chap WLTM a lady 40+ for an uncomplicated discreet friendship with on strings fun. Discretion guaranteed. **Text only. Mailbox: 5595608**

WELL made broad male, 5ft 10ins, medium build, looking for some adult fun with lovely sexy lady, possible LTR or friends with benefits. **Text only. Mailbox: 5321154**

MIKE 49, slim, young looks, seeks female, 35-50 for friendship and going out. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 356651**

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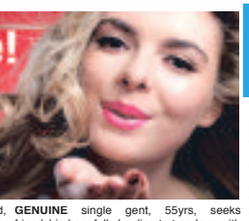

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MATURE male, 50, medium-build, varied interests, seeks true Christian female, 35-45, who enjoys evenings in and dining out, for friendship or possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 419283**

CHRISTIAN male 51, seeking Christian female, 35-45 for friendship, possibly more. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 423747**

MATURE male, 70s, tall, retired, recovering alcoholic, WLTM someone understanding, maybe in the same situation for friendship and mutual support. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425263**

YOUNG looking 63 year old male, GSOH, friendly, considerate, attractive, looking for a naughty female, any age/status, for adult fun and friendship. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425243**

IRISH gent, 66, GSOH, n/s, wishes to meet lady, North Birmingham area, for friendship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425269**

JAMES, 59, 5ft11, average build, WLTM a Christian lady, 60-70, for companionship. Hope to hear from you. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425227**

IRISH male, 62, 5ft 9ins, GSOH, independent, seeks genuine female for friendship initially. Birmingham area. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 403623**

MALE 63, widower, Irish, GSOH, tall, independent, seeks special lady. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 409243**

MALE 65, GSOH, seeks female for friendship and companionship. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 418389**

TOM, 32, slim, attractive, own home, likes to eat out and in, WLTM honest, kind girl for tender, loving care and fun times. No timewasters please. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 424929**

CHRIS, 49yrs honest gent seeks lady 45-55 for socialising, friendship, maybe leading to romance. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425345**

PETER, sincere solvent gent 70s seeks lady to wine dine, foreign travel, all expenses paid. I would love a traveling companion. Genuine advertiser. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425343**

MALCOLM, 60 something gent, own hair and teeth, GSOH, genuine and Kind WLTM sincere lady to wine and dine. Please call. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425335**

PROFESSIONAL gent, 44yrs, tall, attractive and genuine. Seeks genuine feminine lady for genuine romance. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425333**

PIERS, 56yrs, romantic gent WLTM lady to wine, dine, spoil. I'm kind, caring, generous pls call me. Single mums welcome. ACA. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425331**

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GAY feminine female with GSOH WLTM gay feminine females for friendship, possible relationship. **Text only. Mailbox: 5631357**

RETIRED gay male WLTM black or Asian guy for fun. West Mids. Can travel only. **Text only. Mailbox: 4207083**

JONNY, 24yrs, gay curious, not sure what to do, older men pls call me and help me understand. **Text only Mailbox: 4086857**

PAUL, 50, Midlands area, looking to meet up for fun times, maybe relationship with a guy, 25-70, can accommodate. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425487**

MALE, 60, genuine, discreet, WLTM older male, aged 70 upwards, for adult fun, can travel. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425805**

MATURE bi male, looking for younger company, fun and good times. Can accommodate. **Tel No: 0906 500 3955 Box No: 425127**

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Revving up for a full season of race thrills

WITH testing in full swing and motorbikes being fine tuned before the season opener, it's time to have a look at our region's top club racers.

From the ultra-competitive Thundersport GB, to endurance racing, Darley Moor championships and the road racing scene, there's plenty to keep fans occupied over the spring and summer months, right into autumn.

Pete Wright, aged 51, from Tividale, and team-mate Martyn Silviter, 42, from Blackheath, have just returned from testing in Spain.

The Black Country pair, who compete under the double22-two racing banner, will be back in the No Limit Racing Endurance Cup this year, but will move up to 600cc after dominating the clubman class during their debut season in 2016.

Lloyd Shelley, 33, from Burntwood, will be returning to the Darley Moor this year – but his focus will be a first stint in the Thundersport GB Elite Class series on his Triumph 675.

Neil Lloyd, 46, from Wednesbury, will be back on board his Honda RVF400 this year. After finishing runner-up in two classes at the Darley Moor Club Championships in 2016 he will return to the series – but his main focus will be his first shot at road racing.

Goal-line technology 'would be welcome'

STAFFORDSHIRE'S former Premier League referee Alan Wiley has welcomed the news that goal-line technology may be introduced in the Championship from next season.

The 56-year-old, from Burntwood, refereed in England's top flight from 1999-2010 and is pleased that EFL bosses have agreed – in principle – that the second tier shall follow the lead set by the Premier League.

"It's excellent news," said Wiley about the possibility of the Hawk-eye system being introduced in the Championship. Anything that helps make the right decision. It's been very positive in the top division and it'll work in the Championship.

"It's a proven system. Once a decision is made – it's goal or no goal – there's no questioning.Teams work all week to score goals and stop conceding goals so we need something proving it one way or the other."

As to whether the law could be spread to Leagues One and Two, he added: "It would be good if we could but I think it's ultimately down to costs."

Video assistance for officials has also been muted, and while Wiley believes help would be beneficial – he doesn't want the game to lose the human element.

Rutter set to power back on electric bike

MICHAEL RUTTER could be back competing in all seven Isle of Man TT races after revealing plans to test out a new electric bike in America.

The Bridgnorth star has also joined former team-mate Stephen Thompson, who is now running his own Thompson Plastering outfit after recovering from an horrific injury, to race on the island.

Thompson was rushed to hospital after a three-bike smash at the North West 200, in Northern Ireland, in 2015 while racing for the Bathams team.

He eventually lost part of his arm the following year but having felt the pull of the racing scene return, he is now ready to get back in the business of motorbikes – something Rutter was more than happy to help out with.

"Steve had a bad crash and lost his arm. He had a few problems after the crash but he really missed being involved with racing," he said. "He wanted to set up his own team and ours will be helping out.

"He'll be working with us but will have his own awning and his own team. "I'll be riding a Yamaha R6 600cc under his banner for the two supersport races."

Rutter will also be back competing in the Lightweight TT on a bike that has already brought him success.

Ron Flowers – one of the greatest

Ron's at the head of the Flowers dynasty

HE'S one of the greatest players in the history of Wolverhampton Wanderers. And now Ron Flowers is hoping to watch his grandson follow in his illustrious footsteps after the 20-year-old signed a professional contract with Burnley.

A commanding centre-half, Harry Flowers had been turning out for Staffordshire side Brocton earlier this season. But after being spotted by a Clarets scout, he was offered, and accepted, a pro deal at the Lancashire club.

And the youngster knows his grandfather is the perfect role model if he ever needs advice. Born in Edlington, a mining village in South Yorkshire, Ron also had to move away to achieve his footballing ambitions.

He was initially spotted as a teenager by Doncaster Rovers before coming to the attention of Wolves scouts.

But his move to the West Midlands had to wait, with his father Jack insisting he had to finish an apprenticeship with train firm LNER Locomotive before he left Yorkshire.

SPORTING MEMORIES

By Joseph Masi

His form in gold and black also allowed him to shine on the international stage

Rescue

Fortunately, Wolves manager Stan Cullis came to the rescue. He spoke to Jack and offered his son maximum wages for a 17-year-old, meaning that Ron would be earning more a week than his dad did. And reluctantly Jack gave in.

But more disruption was just around the corner. The following year, Ron was called up for National Service.

Applying to the RAF, he completed his initial training at Hednesford followed by a posting to Cosford.

It was during the six weeks of training that Ron made his first-team debut for Wolves against Blackpool.

And while the Molineux men lost, Ron marked the occasion with a goal.

A terrific athlete and fine passer of the ball, Flowers went on to establish himself in the Wolves side for the next 15 years, playing at either wing-half or centre-half.

And it was his partnership with Peter Broadbent that formed the bedrock of the Wolves teams that won the League Championship in 1954, 1958 and 1959, as well as the FA Cup in 1960.

In total, Flowers made 512 appearances for the club between 1952 and 1967, scoring 37 goals – putting him sixth in the club's all-time list of appearance makers.

His form in gold and black also allowed him to shine on the international stage.

In 49 appearances for England, Flowers scored 10 goals and played in the 1962 World Cup. He was also part of Sir Alf Ramsey's squad that famously won the competition in 1966.

Flowers didn't kick a ball in anger during that tournament. But there is no doubt he still played his part.

Flowers suspected then, as he still does now, that he was included in Alf Ramsey's 22-man squad for the finals for a specific reason.

The oldest member of the group, he was there to set an example.

Standby

"I was there to do a job," he said in an exclusive interview with our sister daily the Express & Star.

"As far as I had been concerned, my England career was finished.

"I hadn't been expecting the call."

Flowers also came a whisker away from playing in the biggest game in English football. Before the final in 1966, Jack Charlton had told Ramsey he was struggling with a cold. And that prompted the boss to put Flowers on stand-by.

"The message was, be ready," explains Flowers.

"It was not, as you might expect however, the cause of any nerves, or indeed a restless night. It didn't make any difference to my thinking.

"I knew whatever he might have come down with, he would play.

"Do you really think Jack Charlton was going to miss out on the World Cup final because of a cold? It would have needed to have been one heck of a cold."

After retiring from professional football Ron opened his shop Ron Flowers Sports in Queen Street, Wolverhampton.

Today it is run by his son, and Harry's dad, Glenn.

Ron Flowers playing for England in 1959. He made 49 appearances for England

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Sport

Following in footsteps of a legend? Say it with Flowers

Page 47

Clarke now unbeaten in 15 as a pro

LENNOX Clarke made it 15 professional victories as he defeated the resilient Bartlomiej Grafka in his toughest test to date at the Banks's Stadium.

The unbeaten Halesowen prospect did enough to take all eight rounds, an 80-72 score from the judges. The 25-year-old was sharp throughout but his Polish opponent gave a warning he would be no pushover.

The super middleweight was battling for the centre of the ring and trying to tie Grafka up on the ropes but the 28-year-old powered his way out of trouble.

As the fight reached halfway Grafka appeared to be growing into the contest but it was Clarke who was doing the most work without hurting his opponent.

The sixth and seventh round left Grafka's face blood-stained, from a cut to the nose and the eye but despite the damage the only time the travelling fighter was on the canvas was when he slipped in the seventh.

It was another close round in the eighth but Clarke did enough to earn a clean sweep and move a step closer to the title shot.

West Bromwich's Joshua Stokes put on a masterclass in body punching as he got off to the perfect start in his professional career.

The debutant looked powerful as he punished Mitch Mitchell with crunching hooks, taking a 40-36 victory after following his brother Tom into the professional ranks.

Former kickboxing World Champion Brad Foster, from Lichfield, earned the only stoppage of the night, needing just two and a half minutes to finish Leonard Rafael.

In the opener , 21-year-old Connor Parker of Swadlincote breezed to victory over Liam Richards in a one-sided contest.

Female athlete has made Black Country triathlete history

LAST weekend saw the start of the Duathlon season for Black Country Triathletes who entered the early season Just Ride Duathlon held at Worcester, which consisted of a 5km run, 28km bike ride followed by a 2.5 km run to finish.

Among the entrants were British professional triathlete local girl, Jodie Stimpson who finished first female back in a time of 1:08:47.

Jon Link completed the race in a time of 1:14:37 finishing sixth overall and fourth in the Senior Male 16-39 years age group and Julie Black came home in a time of 1:42:46 finishing fourth female in the Vet 40 age group.

The Black Country Triathlete awards saw overall club series winner prize go to Lauren Evans, the first time a female triathlete has won this title. Awards voted for by club members were given to Nigel Briscoe for male triathlete, Lauren Evans female triathlete, Shameer Gopal most improved triathlete, Lee Moreton received the Graham Shinton Award, with Matt Price as swimmer of the year. Junior triathletes of the year were Reece Ashfield and Abbie Kennard.

Blow to Glassboys' promotion hopes

Danny Maguire heads home Spartans' second

Stourbridge 0 Warrington 1

Football

WARRINGTON substitute Ruben Jerome consigned Stourbridge to a third straight league defeat in a spiky clash which left the home dugout enraged.

Jerome latched on to Michael Monaghan's flick from a long punt forward and lashed into the roof of the net from the edge of the box for the only goal with 17 minutes to play on Monday night.

Warrington had arrived late, leading to a 10-minute delay to kick off. But their time wasting was a feature of a frustrating night which saw the visitors become the first team to shut out the Glassboys twice this season. On Saturday, injury-stricken Stourbridge suffered a setback to their Evo-Stik Premier promotion prospects after being well beaten 2-1 by leaders **Blyth Spartans** in front of a bumper Amblecote crowd of 1,376.

Matt Gould was beaten on 24 minutes when Robbie Dale rifled home a free-kick from fully 30 yards out and Danny Maguire headed home the second on half-time.

Tom Tonks struck a 30-yard consolation with virtually the last kick of the match.

DK UNBEATEN IN FEBRUARY

DK 20 Hereford 12

AT the end of the game it is the scoreboard that counts and it showed a win that keeps the momentum of the season going for Dudley Kingswinford RFC.

The first half was perhaps best summed up from a DK perspective as full of pressure, but with only three points and another penalty that rattled the upright to show for it.

The action was mainly in the Hereford final quarter but DK could not turn their phase play into points, there were too many, forced or no look passes that did not stick, which saw the DK attacks break down. Some were close calls, Mitch Grealey and Stef Shillingford both threatened to break the Hereford defence with direct running, with 'Speedy' tackled a metre short.

Though, when Hereford did win the ball, they often ran it out of defence and this often lead to a turn over around half way and the pressure put back on them. In contrast when DK were in defence they often kicked for position, and one such bout of kicking lead to the three pointer that Duncan kicked.

Salvo

But 3-0 is not a match winning score at half time, but the interval was put to good use by the coaches and the senior players, because the second half started with the DK performance levels at least up a notch or two.

The opening salvo stemmed from some re-invigorated phase play following a midfield scrummage, with a sublime dummy from Danny Hawkins, who went straight through the defence untouched. This break lead to a DK penalty and a scrummage and another penalty, then another scrummage. This time the ball was quickly back to Tommy Huggins, who saw DK overlap to the left and set the backs going, that allowed Shillingford to put the doubt into defenders' minds. He was straight through for the try, Duncan Tompkins added the conversion which was not an easy kick, to put DK 10-0 up.

Hereford, to their credi,t started to come back into the game and enjoyed a period of better field position and this was rewarded with a converted try. With DK's lead cut to 10-7, the crowd became a little nervous for the game was far from won going into the last quarter.

Tompkins then kicked a penalty to increase the DK lead to 13-7.

Once again, Hereford pressed and the DK lead was not looking comfortable, then it was reduced following a flowing move towards the Hereford right-wing, who did well to get in at the corner. A missed conversion from the touchline meant the score was 13-12 to DK, into the final 10 minutes with pressure on both sides.

It was DK who secured the win in that final phase of the game. The pack, who had been a really effective unit in the line out and scrummage, won a scrum in front of the Hereford posts. The visitors saw a yellow card for a collapse, this lead to uncontested scrums and DK opted for another scrum. The ball was in and out quickly and into the hands of Liam Marshall on the left wing. Before the defence could react Marshall was over the line for the try and another beauty from Tompkins out wide made it 20-12, and two scores in front with the watch in favour of DK. That was the final score and added up to an unbeaten February for DK.

Dudley Kingswinford's Mitch Grealey rounds the defence in DK's victorious clash with Hereford

Hospice in auction for Albion fans

MARY Stevens Hospice are offering the opportunity for one person to play for West Bromwich Albion at an upcoming charity match.

A team of West Bromwich Albion legends will play against a Stourbridge FC XI at the War Memorial Athletic Ground, on Sunday, April 2. Darren 'Big Dave' Moore the first star revealed to be turning out to help raise funds for the Hagley Road hospice.

The organisations involved have agreed to auction the opportunity for one person to enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime match day experience, lining up alongside some of the biggest names to play for West Bromwich Albion.

The auction will be done via email, and will remain open to bids until 5pm on March 24. In order to submit a bid, email Amanda Bowen at amanda@mshfundraising.co.uk with your bid, the name and age of the player you're bidding for and a contact number.

Amanda Bowen, deputy head of fundraising & lottery at Mary Stevens Hospice said: "We're over-the-moon to be able to offer someone that opportunity. Every penny of the money raised through this auction will support patients and families here at the hospice. If we can support our patients while giving someone the chance to fulfil a dream then it's something we're proud and excited to do."

Mark Naylor, co-founder of the event and goalkeeping coach at Albion, said: "Wearing the WBA badge is a privilege a lot of the lads involved in the day have been lucky enough to enjoy. There is nothing better than playing for a team you love, in front of a packed out crowd and if you can do that while supporting a cause that we are all so passionate about then that's just the most exciting thing to be involved in."

One goal edges out inconsistent Yeltz

HALESOWEN continued their inconsistent Evo-Stik Premier form with a defeat at Warrington, falling to a first-half injury-time strike by Danny Hattersley.

Ethan Delaney had Halesowen's only first hal effort on goal on 29 minutes, but it went wide. Warrington took the lead right on half-time when Hattersley shot home. In the second half, Lee Chilton saw two efforts saved by Warrington 'keeper Tony McMillan. Joshua Askew and Connor McCarthy went close for the home side. Then, four minutes from time, Delaney saw red for Halesowen after a challenge on Billy Smart and it was game over for John Hill's men.

★★★

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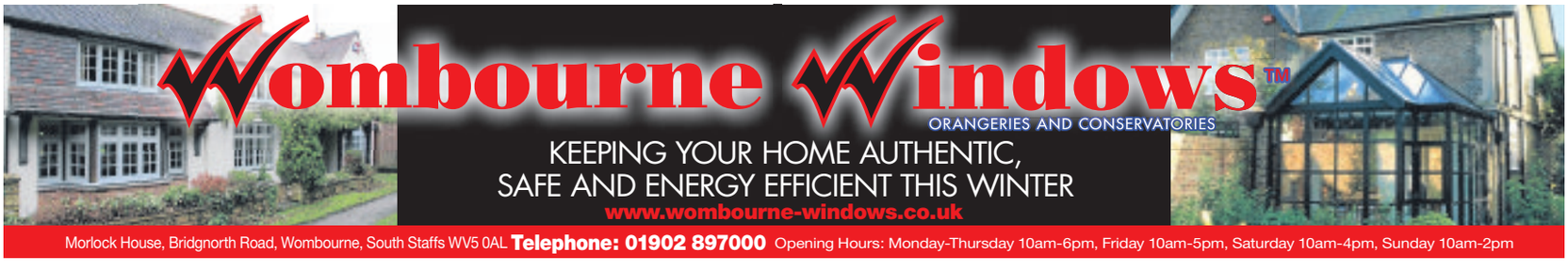
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